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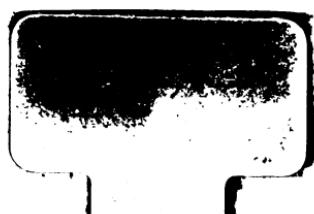
1838
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REFUTATION
OF THE
MISTATEMENTS AND CALUMNIES
CONTAINED IN MR LOCKHART'S
LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.
RESPECTING
THE MESSRS BALLANTYNE.

BY
THE TRUSTEES AND SON OF THE LATE
MR JAMES BALLANTYNE.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS;
AND ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK, EDINBURGH.

1838.

334.

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the Public the following remarks, intended to vindicate the character and conduct of the late Mr James Ballantyne, which have been so foully aspersed by Mr John Gibson Lockhart, in his *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, the Trustees and Executors of that gentleman, acting in concert with his family, conceive that no apology is necessary on their part for the step they have thus taken, nor for the firm and decided manner in which they have repelled the Mistakes and Calumnies by means of which Mr Lockhart has attempted to fix a stain upon the memory of their departed friend. On the contrary, since the appearance of the work in question, and the full

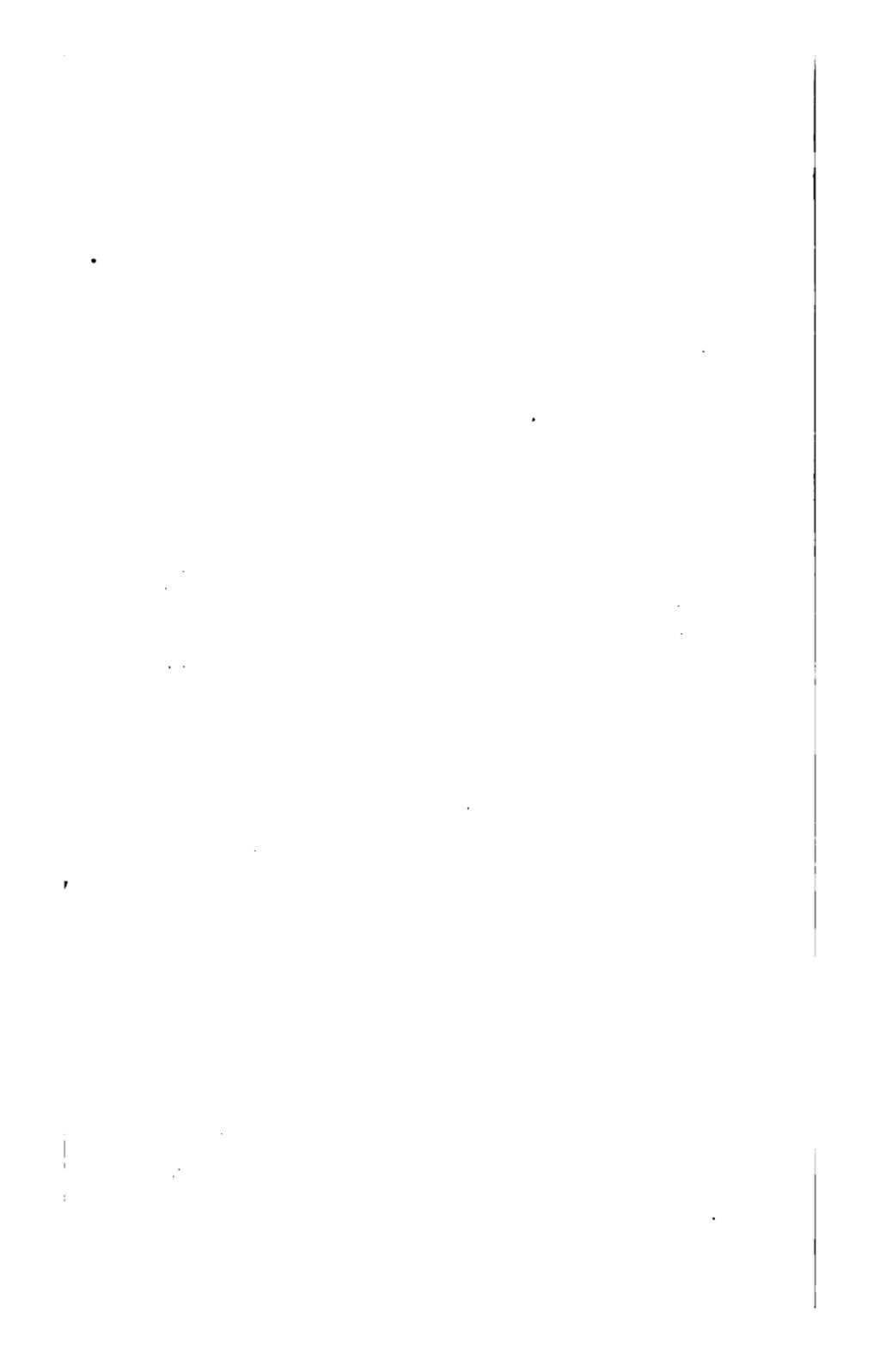
developement of that hostile spirit by which it is pervaded, they have had but one opinion as to the course which their duty prescribed for their adoption ; and, with sufficient materials in their hands for refuting all that Mr Lockhart has alleged or insinuated in disparagement of Mr Ballantyne, they feel that they would neither have done justice to themselves, nor have fulfilled, in its true spirit, the sacred trust confided to them, if they had not come forward to repel the most unjust and ungenerous attack that ever was made upon the memory of an upright and honourable man.

In acting upon these convictions of duty, however, they are aware that they have done so under several disadvantages. They have no pretensions whatever to enter into literary strife with Mr Lockhart; and they cannot stoop to engage in a mere war of words, respecting matters which must be judged and decided by the evidence of facts and documents alone. They are also fully sensible that, if Mr Ballantyne had been still alive, he would have defended himself with far greater ability, and a much more intimate knowledge of the complex transactions they have been called on to unravel, than they either possess or can in any degree pretend to ;

indeed it is their firm belief that, if their excellent friend had been spared, Mr Lockhart would have put the rein upon his imagination, and hesitated to assert what he could not substantiate, and what, in such a case, might have been more easily and effectually disproved. As it is, however, his representatives humbly conceive they have produced evidence sufficient to vindicate his character and conduct, in relation to all his transactions with Sir Walter Scott; and also to convince the world that, so far from having, in any respect, injured his illustrious friend, he was himself the victim of schemes into which he was reluctantly and almost inevitably drawn.

They much regret the delay which has arisen in the appearance of this Refutation,—which, however, from various causes, was unavoidable.

EDINBURGH, *August 1838.*



REFUTATION, &c.

“ Lockhart,” said Sir Walter Scott, when his son-in-law was called to his deathbed, “ I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.”—(*Life of Sir W. Scott*, vol. vii. p. 393.)

WHEN Sir Walter Scott, upon his deathbed, addressed this parting admonition to the gentleman destined to become his literary executor, he not only evinced a deep interest in the welfare of that individual, but at the same time impressively indicated the spirit in which he expected his son-in-law to conduct himself, even in asserting and vindicating his posthumous fame. He recommended that “ goodness” which excludes all malignant thoughts or representations; that “ virtue” which courageously proclaims the truth; and that “ religion” “ which thinketh no evil:” and he solemnly declared, that nothing else would give him any comfort when he came to lie upon the bed of death, there to take the retrospect of his past life and actions.

We are now going to enquire what effect this touching appeal produced upon the mind of the gentleman to

whom it was addressed,—not at the moment, when any human heart not altogether seared must have been softened, and disposed to receive generous impressions, but in following out the duties of the important literary trust committed to him. In doing so, however, we will keep aloof from all speculations, and adhere strictly to facts. *We* shall not concern ourselves with any enquiry into the private views, motives, feelings, or principles of Mr Lockhart, as these might be collected by inference from the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, in which, we lament to say, the character of the dead and the feelings of the living have, in so many instances, been most wantonly assailed. The task which we propose to ourselves is one of a different description, namely, to expose the injustice of his representations in as far as two persons are concerned;—to show that his own disparaging statements are directly contradicted by the evidence which he has himself produced;—and to place in a true light before the public that series of transactions which, either from ignorance or design, he has involved in misrepresentation and perplexity.

Before this *Life* appeared, the pecuniary embarrassments of Sir Walter Scott were matter of general notoriety; and, since its publication, they have been found to constitute the staple subject of the work, and are now, in their origin, progress, and consummation, as fully before the public as Mr Lockhart has been able or willing to place them. Such matters, indeed, have but little interest to the great mass of readers, who seldom think it worth while to take the trouble to understand them, and who are, moreover, indifferent to concerns by which they can in nowise be affected. But in the present instance the case is materially different. The well-earned fame of Sir Walter Scott, and the unparalleled sums which he was generally understood to have

realized by his works, taken in conjunction with the bankruptcy and ruin in which he and those connected with him became ultimately involved, excited a general desire to penetrate the secret of the mystery, which no one was able altogether to unravel, although many had shrewdly divined its real character; and hence the volumes of the *Life*, as they successively appeared, were devoured with all the eagerness of the most impatient curiosity.

Nor has Mr Lockhart been wanting in the use of the means calculated to feed this appetite. By blending his attempts to exculpate his father-in-law from blame, in transactions where he alone was responsible, with caricature portraits and disparaging or degrading anecdotes of Sir Walter's most intimate friends and associates; by libellous misrepresentations and bitter personalities; by exaggerating foibles, recording hasty expressions, and rehearsing after-dinner conversations, where he, perchance, was himself present as a guest; and, generally, by pandering to that depraved taste which gloats over all sorts of revelations calculated to lower to the level of the vulgar herd those who had before appeared to occupy elevated stations;—by these, and other similar means, he has certainly succeeded in giving a certain species of attraction to this portion of his work, unpromising as it seemed, and also in imparting to his cruel and ridiculous distortions a temporary currency and credit.

It must be obvious to every person who has perused the *Life*, that one great object of Mr Lockhart is to rivet on the public mind the impression that all the involvements, embarrassments, and misfortunes of his father-in-law were, in a great measure, if not altogether, attributable to his choice of improper or worthless

instruments. From first to last he labours, directly or indirectly, by assertion and insinuation, by ribaldry and distortion, to deprecate the character, or to throw ridicule on the habits and conduct, of the individuals with whom Sir Walter Scott was chiefly connected, and in whom he most fully confided. The Messrs Ballantyne, in particular, are not only the objects of incessant derision, but they are made the scape-goats of all Scott's errors and misfortunes. No quarter is given to them; all merit, industry, and intelligence, are, in some mode or form, denied them, either explicitly or by implication. They are each introduced upon the scene in a manner calculated, and intended, to be disparaging. They are caricatured in their persons, in their manners, in their habits, and even in their virtues. Their alleged foibles or weaknesses are made the frequent subject of vulgar wit and ribald exaggeration. And, as if all this, and much more of the same sort, were not enough, ludicrous nicknames are bestowed on them, to serve as reminiscences of all that has elsewhere been said or insinuated to their disadvantage; while, to envenom the wound thus inflicted on the feelings of the living, these opprobrious *sobriquets* are affixed upon the alleged authority of Sir Walter Scott, who, if he actually took such liberties with his friends, under cover of the confidential intercourse of private life and good-humoured fellowship, certainly never contemplated that his familiarities would be so scandalously abused by the individual to whom his dying injunctions had prescribed a very different rule of conduct. In a word, Mr Lockhart endeavours, throughout the whole of his work, to aggrandize the character of Sir Walter Scott by depreciating that of the friends whom he most esteemed and trusted; and seeks to exonerate him from all blame connected

with the misfortunes which ruined them all, by insinuating every sort of misdeed or negligence against his associates.*

* In the *Life of Sir Walter Scott* it did not, it seems, occur to Mr Lockhart that the representations he has given of his father-in-law's dearest friends and most constant allies might lead honest people to enquire how, if these men were really such doubtful or ambiguous characters—gluttons or picaroons—as they have been described by him, a gifted being like Scott, who to high genius united great worldly discernment and sagacity, came to associate with and confide in them throughout every vicissitude of fortune, in cloud as well as in sunshine, in storm as well as in calm. A question so natural and so german to the subject (as treated by Mr Lockhart) not having been anticipated by him, no solution had been provided for the unforeseen interrogatory. But, when reflection had shown that it might be convenient to obviate an objection which must present itself to every mind, means were immediately used to supply the omission; and we have now before us the *Standard* newspaper of the 2d April, 1838, in which, under cover of some general remarks on the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, an attempt is made to forestall the anticipated objection; and, in order to give greater prominence to the volunteer defence, the ordinary “leader” of the paper is displaced to make room for it. The writer of the article in question, after telling us that “Sir Walter Scott was the greatest man that has lived in our generation,” and that “he was the wisest man of his own and of many ages,” proceeds to throw a little shade into his picture, by way of enhancing the ultimate effects:—“He had *weaknesses*, but they were the effect of a lofty and modest nature; *he was indiscreet in the selection of associates*, from generous confidence and a too much expanded benevolence.” We speak with much deference, but we must, nevertheless, be permitted to observe, that a tendency to herd with improper associates appears to us to be a strange “effect of a generous and modest nature;” one, indeed, which we should never have *a priori* anticipated from our own knowledge of human nature. And, on the other hand, with regard to the assertion that Sir Walter Scott’s alleged indiscretion “in the selection of associates” arose “from generous confidence and a too much expanded benevolence,” we shall, in the sequel, be under the necessity of testing the value of this rhetoric by a species of logic (that of figures) to which Mr Lockhart seems to be in a great measure a stranger.

A shrewder biographer, recollecting the old maxim, *Noscitur a sociis*, would, perhaps, have avoided paying so bad a compliment to the understanding, judgment, and principles of his hero as is involved in the portraiture he has thus drawn of his most intimate and confidential friends. But, as Mr Lockhart has not thought it proper to exercise any such discretion in regard to the persons who enjoyed his father-in-law's esteem and confidence; as he has even published documents, and made disclosures, which the dictates of ordinary prudence and good feeling would have led any other man, similarly situated, to withhold; and as he has sought, by means hitherto unknown in English literature, to ridicule and disparage estimable men, the victims of schemes into which they were almost unavoidably drawn, by gradual entanglements and the controlling force of circumstances;—it has become essentially necessary, in justice to all parties, the dead as well as the living, to show that Mr Lockhart's imputations against the Messrs Ballantyne are equally at variance with the evidence which he has himself produced, and with facts which, having access to know them, he was bound to make himself master of, before presuming to appear before the public in the character of an accuser. It is, no doubt, a very hard matter to deal with charges resting solely upon such vain, and foolish, and untenable grounds as we have already described; and it is still harder to be, in some measure, under the necessity of proving a negative—which, in fact, is, to a certain extent, the task we have here undertaken. But truth, rectitude, and integrity are strong enough to assert their supremacy under almost any disadvantages, and to render the unjust accusation innocuous to all except the unjust accuser. With reference to James Ballantyne, in particular, his family, regarding his good name as the best

part of their inheritance, are by no means disposed to consent that his memory should be loaded with unmerited obloquy in a work to which, at Mr Lockhart's own request, he had on his deathbed contributed some of its most "precious contents." His relations and friends, including the Trustees appointed under his last will, participate in the same feeling, enhanced as it is by the conviction that he was as "good," "virtuous," and "religious" a man as Sir Walter Scott wished his literary executor to be; and the present publication is therefore intended to refute, by plain facts, authentic documents, and indisputable evidence, every imputation derogatory to Mr Ballantyne which Mr Lockhart has thought proper to introduce into his work.

But, before entering into the discussion of the various questions which arose out of the alliance of Sir Walter Scott with Mr James Ballantyne, it may be proper, by way of introduction, to notice here the mode in which Mr John Ballantyne is introduced by Mr Lockhart to his readers; more especially as, by doing so, we shall at once convey to the reader a pretty accurate notion of the whole tone and temper of his book, and, at the same time, exemplify his negligence of facts, when they come into competition with his habitual straining after effect, at whatever sacrifice it may be obtained.

After stating that John was a younger brother of James, and "had been originally bred to his father's trade of a merchant" in Kelso, he continues,—"But James's rise in the world was not observed by him (John) without ambitious longings; for he, too, had a love, and he at least fancied that he had a talent, for literature. He *left Kelso abruptly* for the chances of the English metropolis. After a short residence in London, where, among other things, he officiated for a few months as a *clerk in a banking-house*, the continued

intelligence of the printer's prosperity *determined him to return to Scotland*. Not finding any opening at the moment in Edinburgh, he again tried the shop at Kelso; but his habits had not been improved by his short sojourn in London, and the business soon melted to nothing in his hands. His goods were disposed of by auction *for the benefit of his creditors*; the paternal shop was closed; and John again quitted his birthplace under circumstances which, I shall show in the sequel, had *left a deep and painful trace* even upon that volatile mind." (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 196.) In this sketch of John Ballantyne's early history, there is a laboured particularity, and seeming accuracy of specification, calculated to impose upon the reader, and to induce a belief that it must have been drawn up from detailed, as well as authentic information. But a more erroneous notion could not possibly be entertained.

Mr Lockhart's statement is inaccurate in almost every particular. Mr John Ballantyne did not "leave Kelso abruptly for the English metropolis;" he never officiated as "a clerk in a London banking-house;" "the continued intelligence of the printer's prosperity" did not "determine him to return to Scotland," because it *could* not,—James Ballantyne not having settled in Edinburgh until about *seven years* after his brother's return from London! It is incorrect, therefore, that, "not finding an opening in Edinburgh, he again tried the shop in Kelso," he having made no attempt to find such "opening" until nearly ten years subsequent to this period: his business in Kelso did not "soon melt to nothing in his hands;" and, lastly, it is not true that "his goods were disposed of by auction for the benefit of his creditors." The different assertions contained in this short extract are all groundless and imaginary, without the slightest foundation in fact, as Mr Lockhart might have easily dis-

covered by making the necessary enquiries. From those of his contemporaries who still survive, the truth could have been ascertained had the truth been wanted.

The father of the Messrs Ballantyne, a man of unchallengeable respectability, notwithstanding Mr Lockhart's paltry sneer about his being a petty shopkeeper, carried on the business of a dealer in goods of all sorts, as was then usual with merchants in country towns. Being in easy, if not in affluent circumstances, the elder Ballantyne gave his sons a liberal, and what was then considered, in the place, an expensive education. But, as John was intended to follow the calling of his father, the latter, being desirous to afford him an opportunity of acquiring a more extensive and thorough knowledge of business than could be attained in a provincial town, sent him for that purpose to London, in the year 1794. This is what Mr Lockhart has been pleased to describe as "leaving Kelso *abruptly* for the *chances* of the English metropolis,"—thereby insinuating that his departure was compulsory, or caused by some discreditable occurrence. After spending about a year in London, John returned to Kelso in 1795, and was immediately admitted into partnership with his father. In 1797 he married, and the partnership was very soon afterwards dissolved. But his father, at the same time, resigned to him one principal department of his business; and this John Ballantyne continued to carry on until he left Kelso, and came to settle in Edinburgh, in the year 1805. Hence, from the time when he left London until that when he settled in Edinburgh, he continued to reside as a merchant in Kelso; and we therefore leave it to Mr Lockhart to explain how "the continued intelligence of the printer's prosperity," who did not settle in Edinburgh until the year 1802, could "determine" his brother John "to return to Scotland" in the year 1795. This brief recital

furnishes a pointed specimen of Mr Lockhart's historical accuracy, when he professes to relate *facts*.* Mr Lockhart, in conclusion, informs us that “John again quitted his birthplace under circumstances which, *I shall show in the sequel*, left a deep and painful trace even upon that volatile mind.” We have searched in vain “in the sequel” for the ominous disclosure here so formally announced; and we are therefore left in complete ignorance as to the nature of the “circumstances” which produced so “deep and painful” an effect even upon the “volatile mind” of John Ballantyne. But, if Mr Lockhart had no better authority for his promised revelation than for the other “circumstances” above noticed, it must be admitted that for once he has exercised a sound discretion in omitting to fulfil his engagement.

The foregoing piece of personal history is followed by a gross and libellous caricature of the two brothers. The one is described as a gourmand; the other is represented as something worse. Scott, it is said, used to apply to them certain grotesque nicknames, which Mr Lockhart, with his characteristic taste and feeling, has published. But still they had some merit, even in the eyes of the man who has so cruelly aspersed their memories. “They entertained him (Scott); they both loved and revered him, and I believe would have shed their heart's blood in his service; but they both, as men of affairs, *deeply injured him*—and above all, the day that brought John into pecuniary connexion with him was the blackest in his calendar. A more reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business.” It was certainly something

* We have said, *ante*, that “the printer's” prosperity in Edinburgh could not have determined John Ballantyne to return to Scotland, “*the printer*” not having settled in Edinburgh till *seven years thereafter*. We may add, that John returned to Scotland *two years before James had become a printer at all!*

to entertain Scott; it was more “to love and revere him;” and it was most of all that Mr Lockhart “believes” they “would have shed their heart’s blood in his service.” But even these singular and, as we should think, redeeming virtues, were, it seems, overbalanced, if not extinguished, by the consideration that “both, as men of affairs, deeply injured him;” and, above all, that “the day which brought John into pecuniary connexion with him was the blackest in his calendar.”

Now, we shall prove that these assertions are contradicted by the evidence of Sir Walter, as quoted by Mr Lockhart himself;—that, so far from his having been “deeply injured” by his connexion with the Ballantynes, he was thereby greatly benefited;—that his own large expenditure absorbed the whole profits of the printing establishment, and much more besides, involving the elder brother in ruin at a period of life when, from the nature and extent of his business, he might otherwise have possessed a comfortable, if not an affluent independence;—and that the day which brought “John Ballantyne into pecuniary connexion with Scott,” and which Mr Lockhart styles “the blackest in his calendar,” was eventually productive of no greater calamity to Sir Walter than replacing in full his advances on the bookselling business, “with a balance of a thousand pounds,” notwithstanding the most imprudent undertakings in which he had embarked. All these circumstances will fall under our review in the sequel, where, eschewing the example of Mr Lockhart, we shall endeavour to make our statements square with our proofs; leaving it to others to draw upon their imagination, which is at all times an easier matter than to submit to the drudgery of examining facts. In the mean-time, as he tells us that “a more reckless, thoughtless, and improvident adventurer” than John Ballantyne “never rushed into the serious responsibilities of business;” and as he

even insinuates that his integrity was by no means of a kind to be relied upon, we shall take leave to oppose to the damning statements and innuendoes of Mr Lockhart the decisive evidence of Sir Walter Scott, even when writing in a moment of irritation and displeasure. In a letter, dated the 18th of May, 1813, addressed to Mr John Ballantyne, Sir Walter, in conclusion, says,—
“ Adieu, my dear John. I have the most sincere regard for you, and you may depend on my considering your interest with quite as much attention as my own. If I have ever expressed myself with irritation in speaking of this business [the disposal from the stock of John Ballantyne and Co. to Constable's firm of certain unsaleable books and copyrights], you must impute it to the sudden, extensive, and unexpected embarrassments in which I found myself involved all at once. If to *your real goodness of heart and integrity*, and to the quickness and acuteness of your talents, you added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage TO TELL DISAGREEABLE TRUTHS TO THOSE YOU HOLD IN REGARD, I PRONOUNCE THAT THE WORLD NEVER HELD SUCH A MAN OF BUSINESS. These it must be your study to add to your other good qualities.”—*(Life, vol. iii. pp. 59, 60.)*

This, then, is the character given by Sir Walter Scott, writing under irritated feelings, of the person Mr Lockhart describes as the “ most reckless, thoughtless, and improvident adventurer that ever rushed into the serious responsibilities of business.” If to his real goodness of heart and integrity he had added habits of more universal circumspection, and, above all, the courage to tell disagreeable truths to those he held in regard,—such, for instance, as Sir Walter himself,—the latter would have pronounced “ that the world never held such a man of business :” in a word, to be perfect in all respects John Ballantyne had only to add “ these to his other good

qualities." But, according to Mr Lockhart, he was a "most reckless, thoughtless, improvident adventurer," without reflection and without probity, having neither steadiness, consistency, nor principle of any kind, and withal, a sort of picaroon or plunderer in a small way.* Whom, then, are we to believe? Sir Walter Scott or Mr Lockhart?—the friend who knew him thoroughly, and entertained for him "the most sincere regard," founded upon that knowledge; or the biographer who did not know him at all, yet years after his death has attempted to attaint his name and stigmatise his memory? In such a case, the public, we think, can have but little difficulty in coming to a decision.

* "John," says Mr Lockhart, "had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge him with any *deep* or *deliberate* malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of 'my little picaroon,' indicates *all* that I desired to imply on that score." (*Life*, vol. iii. p. 110.) "All!" why, picaroon means *robber* or *plunderer*, and the epithet "little" only limits the *extent*, but does not affect the quality of the imputation. But how, it may be asked, came Sir Walter to apply such a term to the friend he loved and esteemed? We answer—jestingly, in a copy of doggerel verses, refusing to own the authorship of *Waverley*, and which verses were never intended for any eye but that of him to whom they were addressed. Here they are, in all their nakedness, as published by Mr Lockhart.

" No, John, I will not own the book—
 I won't, you Picaroon.
 When next I try St Grubby's brook,
 The A of Wa— shall bait the hook,
 And flat fish bite as soon
 As if before them they had got
 The worn-out wriggler, WALTER SCOTT."

It cannot be said of Mr Lockhart's philosophy of character, that it is deep-drawn or far-fetched. A word jocularly stuck into a copy of doggerel verses, to serve as a peg upon which to hang a rhyme, is quite sufficient for his purpose, and suffices to attach an odious imputation to the name of one whose integrity was, in his lifetime, approved by the person who had enjoyed the very best opportunities of putting it to the test.

One word more, illustrative of the feelings entertained by Sir Walter Scott towards the object of this posthumous defamation. Mr John Ballantyne died at Edinburgh on the 16th June, 1821, and was interred in the Canongate churchyard there. At the funeral, Scott, affected by the loss he had sustained, for such he evidently considered it,* “cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then, turning to the grave again, ‘*I feel*,’ he whispered in Mr Lockhart’s ear,—‘*I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth.*’” We are told by Mr Lockhart himself that he had been “visibly and profoundly shaken” by the death of his friend; and can any one think so meanly of Sir Walter Scott, even on the authority of his son-in-law and literary executor, as to suppose, for a moment, that he could have been thus affected in regard to a person such as Mr Lockhart, for reasons best known to himself, has described Mr John Ballantyne? or that, if the latter had been unworthy of his regard, he would have declared, over his yet unclosed grave, that he felt as if there would be

* Sir Walter, writing to his son, immediately after the death of the friend whom he knew and liked so well, thus expressed himself:—“*I have had a very great loss in poor John Ballantyne, who is gone, after a long illness. He persisted to the very last in endeavouring to take exercise, in which he was often imprudent, and was up and dressed the morning before his death. In his will, the grateful creature has left me a legacy of L.2000, liferentled, however, by his wife, and the rest of his little fortune goes betwixt his two brothers. [This legacy, however, for want of funds, was not paid.] I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do.*” If further proof were wanting of the estimation in which Mr John Ballantyne was held by his friend and patron, we might add, that shortly after his death Sir Walter commissioned Mr Allan, the eminent artist, to paint a small portrait of him from recollection, to be hung up in Abbotsford, where it still remains.

less sunshine for *him* after the cold earth had been heaped upon the remains of the man whom he had so long loved?

There is some obscurity as to the constitution of the firm of James Ballantyne and Company, or, at least, as to Sir Walter's original views in its formation; but it seems to us demonstrable, that Scott contemplated a business connexion with Mr Ballantyne a considerable time *before* the latter left Kelso. A letter of Sir Walter's, addressed to Mr Ballantyne in the spring of 1800, urging his removal to Edinburgh,—“a migration from Kelso to this place,”—and stating a variety of reasons commendatory of the project, taken in conjunction with what subsequently took place, appears to put this matter beyond the reach of doubt. After apologizing to Mr Ballantyne for mentioning the plan, he proceeds thus:—

“Three branches of printing are quite open in Edinburgh, all of which, I am well convinced, you have both the ability and inclination to unite in *your* person. The first is that of an editor of a newspaper, which shall contain something of an uniform historical deduction of events, distinct from the farrago of detached and unconnected plagiarisms from the London paragraphs of the *Sun*. Perhaps it might be possible (and Gillon has promised to make enquiry about it) to treat with the proprietors of some established paper—suppose the *Caledonian Mercury*—and we would all struggle to obtain for it some celebrity. To this might be added a ‘Monthly Magazine’ and ‘Caledonian Annual Register,’ if you will; for both of which, with the excellent literary assistance which Edinburgh at present affords, there is a fair opening. The next object would naturally be Session papers, the best paid work which a printer undertakes, and of which, I dare say, you would soon have a considerable share; for, as you make it your business to

superintend your proofs yourself, your education and abilities would insure your employers against the gross and provoking blunders which the poor composers are often obliged to submit to. The publication of works, either ancient or modern, opens a third fair field for ambition. The only gentleman who attempts any thing in that way is in very bad health; nor can I, at any rate, compliment either the accuracy or the execution of his press. I believe it is well understood that, with equal attention, an Edinburgh press would have superior advantages even to those of the metropolis; and, though I would not advise launching into that line at once, yet it would be easy to feel your way by occupying your press in this manner on vacant days only." Sir Walter adds—"It appears to me that such a plan, judiciously adopted and diligently pursued, opens a fair road to an ample fortune. In the mean-while, the *Kelso Mail* might be so arranged as to be still a source of some advantage to you; and I dare say, if wanted, *pecuniary assistance might be procured to assist you at the outset, either upon terms of a share or otherwise.*"—(*Life*, vol. i. pp. 320, 321.)

This plan, as Mr Lockhart conceives, was "primarily suggested by the friendly interest which he (Sir Walter) took in Ballantyne's fortunes;" but it must be equally obvious that he had private views of his own; and, accordingly, we find that Mr James Ballantyne had not been long in Edinburgh, when his friend effected the object which he had from the first contemplated, and got himself "admitted as a third-sharer in his business." Mr Lockhart now pauses to comment, palliate, explain, and prophesy after the event. "The alliance with Ballantyne," says he, "soon infected him (Scott) with the proverbial rashness of mere mercantile adventure;" and "hence," he adds, in conclusion, "by degrees was woven a web of entanglement, from which

neither Ballantyne nor his adviser had any means of escape." Doubtless, "a web of entanglement" *was* woven, but certainly not from "the rashness of mere mercantile adventure." The profits of the printing concern were at that time twice as large as those that are generally derived from this business now-a-days; and, if they had been applied to their legitimate purpose, they would have soon unwoven the meshes of any "entanglement" proper to the business. It is true, that the rashness of Scott's literary schemes,—the extreme imprudence of which his biographer has not attempted to disguise,—must have considerably embarrassed both himself and his partner; but even these were not the cause of Scott's ultimate "entanglements," as Mr Lockhart asserts in a subsequent part of the work; the business of the printing-house having been ample enough to conquer all the difficulties which sprung from that source. Neither was the unfortunate Bookselling business,—"begun," as Mr Lockhart most truly says, "in the short-sighted heat of pique, and conducted with the extravagant folly of a raw speculator in the perilous trade of publishing,"—in any way the cause of the embarrassments in which Sir Walter Scott became eventually involved. Even although it had, his biographer would not have been entitled to complain; for it was entirely of Scott's own seeking. That concern was established to meet his own views at the time; he having a one-half share,* and James and John Ballantyne one-fourth share each, with a salary to the latter as manager. But, although the difficulties arising from the bookselling concern were troublesome at the time, they were not lasting. John Ballantyne, in his "Memorandum"—which Mr Lockhart quotes,

* Mr Lockhart states incorrectly (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 223) that the bond of copartnership only bound Scott "as one-third partner;" he had a one-half share, as mentioned above.

but does not condescend to inform us how or by what means it chanced to come into his hands*—attributes them in part to “the most extravagant and foolish advances from its funds to the printing concern;” in other words, to the paying the accounts due for printing the “*unpromising*” literary adventures in which Scott rashly embarked, and which have been pretty correctly enumerated by Mr Lockhart himself.†

But even the bad stock—and none could possibly be

* When the papers of Mr John Ballantyne were, after his death, examined by his executors, there was found amongst them a sealed packet, superscribed, “Open not, read not,” and which was taken charge of by Sir Walter Scott. *Quare*—Was the “Memorandum” above referred to among the contents of this packet?

† To give our readers some idea of these “adventures,” and at the same time to show how “the Ballantynes” conducted themselves, we shall quote the following passage from the *Life* (vol. ii. pp. 331, 332) :—“The publishing firm was as yet little more than a twelve-month old, and already James (Ballantyne) *began to apprehend* that some of their mightiest undertakings *would wholly disappoint Scott's prognostications*. He speaks with particular alarm of the edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, of which Weber had now dismissed several volumes from his incompetent and presumptuous hand. How Scott should ever have countenanced the project of an edition of an English book of this class by a mere drudging German, appears to me *quite inexplicable*. He placed at Weber's disposal his own annotated copy, which had been offered some years before for the use of Gifford; *but Weber's text is thoroughly disgraceful, and so are all the notes*, except those which he owed to his patron's own pen. James Ballantyne augurs, and well might he do so, not less darkly as to the ‘Aston Speculation;’ that is, the bulky collection entitled ‘Tixal Poetry.’ ‘Over this,’ he says, “the (Edinburgh) Review of the Sadler (Sadler's *State Papers*) has thrown a heavy cloud; the fact is, it seems to me to have ruined it. Here is the same editor, and the same printer, and your name withdrawn. I hope you agree with John and me that this Aston business ought to be got rid of at almost any sacrifice. We could not now even ask a London bookseller to take a share; and a net outlay of near £2500, upon a worse than doubtful speculation, is surely ‘most tolerable, and not to be endured.’”

worse—accumulated in consequence of those rash and ill-judged speculations, was, in the end, disposed of upon advantageous terms ; the house met all its engagements ; and Sir Walter, who ultimately became the sole creditor, “ paid even himself *in full*, with a balance of a thousand pounds.” What, then, it has justly been asked, “ becomes of the *ruin* which John Ballantyne had entailed upon Sir Walter, if, after all the wild speculations in which Scott had involved the young and starved concern, he was paid *in full*, and a thousand pounds more ?” To every reader of Mr Lockhart’s work it must be as clear as noonday, that Sir Walter Scott’s embarrassments did not spring from his connexion with the Ballantynes, either as printers or booksellers ; but originated solely in his ambition to become a landed proprietor, and to “ endow a family,” before he had acquired the means of effecting either upon any sound or secure foundation. And it is equally evident that Mr James Ballantyne was eventually ruined by Sir Walter Scott ;—rendered penniless at a time when he ought to have been able, if so inclined, to retire with a handsome competence. If Sir Walter Scott had never been connected with James Ballantyne in business, but had contented himself with extending his patronage to his old schoolfellow, it would have been infinitely better for both parties. Mr Ballantyne would, in that case, have realized a respectable fortune ; and Sir Walter would have escaped the temptations presented by the facilities of a mercantile copartnership, to raise money for the purchase of lands for which he had not otherwise the means of paying.

Sir Walter Scott’s embarrassments, and the consequent embarrassment and ruin of his partner, arose, as we have just stated, from his extensive purchases of land before he had realized money to pay for it ; and from his making a free use of the name of the Company

(with the consent of his partner, of course) to meet the payments for these purchases,—a proceeding which led to a series of bill transactions with Constable and Company, which, on the failure of that firm, brought ruin both on himself and on Mr James Ballantyne. Money wanted was raised, first, by acceptances to James Ballantyne and Co., for a portion of the amount required; and, secondly, by obtaining from Constable and Co., *as if for literary property*, promissory-notes or acceptances for a further portion: for these James Ballantyne and Co. granted acceptances to Constable and Co.; and the remaining portion was raised by James Ballantyne and Co. drawing bills on Constable and Co., and granting acceptances in return;—Sir Walter Scott, the sole party for whom these extensive accommodations were arranged, remaining all the while in the back-ground, unseen and unnamed. Whatever accommodation the printing concern may, at one period, have obtained from Constable and Co., the passion for land came speedily to monopolize the supplies; and the ultimate application of the sums raised in the manner above stated was to pay the price of these imprudent purchases. Mr Lockhart may possibly feel inclined to question the accuracy of this statement; but we shall establish it upon the authority of both Sir Walter Scott and Mr James Ballantyne, which we conceive to be the best that can be produced. But, before doing so, it may be proper to introduce here an extract from the third volume of the *Life* (p. 62), illustrative of that *sceleratus amor terræ*, and other minor but expensive propensities, for which Sir Walter Scott was so conspicuously distinguished.

“ His preachments of regularity in book-keeping to John, and of abstinence from good cheer to James Ballantyne, were equally vain; but, on the other hand, it must be allowed that *they had some reason for dis-*

pleasure (the more felt because they durst not, like him, express their feelings), when they found that scarcely had these 'hard skirmishes' terminated in the bargain of May 18th (1813),* *before Scott was preparing fresh embarrassment for himself [and others]*, by commencing a negotiation for a considerable addition to his property of Abbotsford. . . . The new property which Scott was so eager to acquire was that hilly tract stretching from the old Roman road near Turnagain towards the Cauldshields loch; a then desolate and naked mountain-mere. To obtain this lake at one extremity of his estate, as a contrast to the Tweed at the other, was a prospect for which *hardly any sacrifice would have appeared too much*; and he contrived to gratify his wishes in the course of that July to which he had spoken of himself in May as looking forward 'with the deepest anxiety.' Nor was he, I must add, more able to control some of his minor tastes [for expensive trifles,† old armour, swords, guns, relics of the olden time, and such like].'' And, in another place,—“ In a word, his foibles were well known, and many persons about him took care to profit by them. Dance who chose, he commonly began by paying the piper, *from what quarter soever the money might come.*”

The whole of that financial system by which these cravings were partially satiated must now be laid open. Mr Lockhart alone is responsible for the necessity of the exposure. He has stated, in broad and unqualified terms, that Sir Walter Scott never drew money from the printing concern; and in one sense this may be said to be true. But he did what was precisely the same thing. For, by a document before us, dated the 17th of April, 1823, entitled, “ Memorandum as to James Ballantyne and

* This alludes to the treaty with Constable and Co. about part of the unsaleable stock of John Ballantyne and Co.

† Sir Walter's own expression,—see *Life*, vol. vi. p. 138.

Co.'s Accounts," it appears that the "amount of discounts paid on Sir Walter Scott's account, from 15th May, 1822, to 17th April, 1823, being *eleven months*, was L.1146, 19s. 3d.!"—in other words, at the rate of more than L.1200 a-year, exclusive of exchanges on remittances, and bill-stamps. Two-thirds of the entire profits of the business were thus expended in raising money solely for the accommodation of Sir Walter Scott.

But the real state of the case may be brought out in a still more explicit and unchallengeable form. In the year 1822, James Ballantyne and Co. thought proper to balance their affairs, and, under some new arrangements, to enter into a new contract of copartnership. This instrument was executed on the 1st of April that year. The *vidimus* then made up by an agent mutually employed by the parties is now before us; and it shows that the bills then current, in the name of James Ballantyne and Co., *but for Sir Walter Scott's private accommodation alone*, amounted to L.26,896, 5s. 11d. ; while, neither at that time nor subsequently, was there a single accommodation-bill current on account of the Company itself. No means having been taken by Sir Walter Scott to clear off any part of this large sum, it was kept floating by successive renewals of accommodation-bills, the most expensive of all modes of raising money, not to say also the most precarious ; and the consequence was, that a large and constantly augmenting addition was made to the original amount, by the expense attending these multiplied renewals. But, further, whenever Sir Walter was in want of money for any purpose, ordinary or extraordinary, a new note was asked for and obtained. If a builder received a bill for work done at Abbotsford, it was generally made payable by a note on James Ballantyne and Co. ; or if a remittance was necessary to buy Sir Walter's eldest son a step in his regiment, James

Ballantyne and Co. were called upon to assist in the same form. Thus, the sum which in December 1822 was only L.26,896, 5s. 11d. had, at the time of the bankruptcy in 1826, been increased, by stamps, discounts, and bank exchange, by L.8085, 3s. 1d. ; and by promissory-notes granted to Sir Walter Scott by James Ballantyne and Co. for the other purposes enumerated, by the sum of L.17,142, 18s. 10d.* It is so far from being true, therefore, as Mr Lockhart affirms, that Sir Walter Scott never drew any thing from the business, that there is the most conclusive evidence to show, that, excepting the means necessary to carry it on, and Mr James Ballantyne's personal and family expenses, he drew from it *all* its earnings, and more than all. Mr James Ballantyne's whole share of the profits, deducting the expense of his family, was floating in the business at the command of Sir Walter Scott, besides the profit accruing to him from his one-sixth share of all the new novels, after the death of his brother John. He had cast his bread upon the waters, but it did not return to him after many days of labour and sorrow. He lost all, and was, besides, stripped of every thing he possessed, except his household furniture. Not a wreck was saved,—not even his house, which had been bought with his wife's fortune, and which, in the fulness of his confidence, he had not taken any means to secure to her and her children.

All this may appear to be the very excess of unreflecting simplicity ; and Mr Ballantyne may be blamed for his apparent facility in thus lending himself to the purposes of Sir Walter Scott, and carrying his accommodations to such an extent. But, in judging of this matter, the relative positions of the parties should be duly weighed and considered. Our impression is, that

* See General Abstract of Sir Walter Scott's Accounts, p. 59.

he had no choice left; Sir Walter Scott, to use his own phrase, "had laid down the law," and refusal was not to be thought of. Besides, Mr Ballantyne thought, that if "the worst came to the worst," there was Abbotsford, which would secure every one, and make up for every deficiency. Still, it is certain that he had, occasionally, misgivings on the subject; for, notwithstanding Mr Lockhart's assertion to the contrary, he did "make serious efforts to master these formidable balances of figures." We have seen them, and cannot, therefore, admit Mr Lockhart's assertion against incontrovertible evidence. He summed up Sir Walter Scott's liabilities, or rather the liabilities of James Ballantyne and Co. 'on his account; and he set against these Sir Walter's means of meeting them summarily, should that become necessary; concluding his estimate of available resources with,—"then add Abbotsford, so there is the head for the washing."

It is at once curious and painful to observe how anxiously Mr Lockhart labours to throw odium on "the Ballantynes," on James as well as on John, though in a manner somewhat different. Where he condescends, in any instance, to appeal to evidence, or to profess to rest his statements upon facts, we shall always be ready to join issue with him; confident of being able to refute his allegations, and expose his misrepresentations. But, in such a case as the following, where he deliberately attempts, on his own authority alone, to repeat the injuries he had previously inflicted, and to lacerate afresh the feelings he had already wounded, we can do little more than submit the outrage to the judgment of the public; asking them merely to apply to such representations as this the same standard of criticism which we shall furnish in regard to statements precise enough to be met and refuted by direct disproof.

“ The early history of Scott’s connexion with the Ballantynes,” says he, “ has been already given in abundant detail; and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, *at whatever pain to my own feelings* (!) or those of others, from setting down plainly and directly my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers.* I find, *without surprise*, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations. That I cannot help —though I sincerely regret having been compelled, *in justice to Scott*, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of *the elder* Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man; that his principles were of a lofty stamp—his feelings pure even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable, as well as amusing qualities; and I am far from wishing to charge him with any *deep* or *deliberate* malversation. Sir Walter’s own epithet of

* It is much to be regretted, that Mr Lockhart should have “ felt it his duty not to shrink” from giving so much “ pain to his own feelings and those of others,” by recording “ impressions” which are only complained of by reason of his gross exaggerations and injustice. Would it not have been better if he had revised his “ impressions,” and spared his “ feelings” any “ pain,” to which his subjecting himself on this account was altogether a penitent of supererogation on his part?

‘my little picaroon’ indicates all that I desire to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others; nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from feelings of a different sort, *honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.*

“He had received the education, not of a printer, but a solicitor; and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master-printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his; but he appears never to have understood that types needed watching as well as setting. If the page looked handsome, he was satisfied. In a word, James never comprehended, that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind) the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connexion with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street; not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent—but the most negligent and inefficient of master-printers.”—(*Life*, vol. vi. pp. 109, 110, 111.)

We beg leave here to observe, first, that it would be very satisfactory if Mr Lockhart would, in some shape or other, show the public *in what respect* “justice to Scott” placed him under the stern necessity of vilifying friends who had been so “intimately connected with

him throughout long years of mutual confidence," and, in doing so, "becoming the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms." For our part, we are unable to discover any relation whatever between the means and the end—between the evil confessedly done, and the object alleged as "compelling" its commission; and we shall be happy to receive information on a point respecting which our own unaided efforts have failed to enlighten us.

But, in the next place, and overlooking the complimentary cant interwoven in this passage, let us attend for a moment to the substance of Mr Lockhart's statements. Mr Ballantyne, who was "not certainly an idle man—quite the reverse, though naturally indolent," yet "most negligent and inefficient," appears to have possessed the most incongruous and contradictory attributes. "He was busy, indeed; and *inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour.*" "It is most true that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it *absolutely necessary*, that whatever he wrote should be subjected to *far more than the usual amount of inspection* required at the hands of the printer; and it is equally so that *it would have been, extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James.*" Now, to a less ingenuous person than Mr Lockhart, it would probably have occurred, that the circumstance here stated might afford a satisfactory solution of the anomaly by which he is so sorely vexed. "Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition," and the "extreme difficulty of finding another person willing and able" to remove their inaccuracies and imperfections, sufficiently account for the arrangement which Mr Lockhart at once censures and proves to have been necessary. James, however,

did quit his “ comfortable library,” and “ occupied, during many hours every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate ;” but still Mr Lockhart is not satisfied. The inevitable sins of “ correcting proof-sheets,” and “ writing critical notes and letters to the Author of *Waverley*,”—labours which, by his own showing, *were* inevitable, and could be performed by no one else,—shut up his bowels of compassion, and draw down severe reprehension on the memory of the friendly corrector.

In page 113 of the same volume, Mr Lockhart says,—“ I fancy it will be only too apparent that he (James Ballantyne) never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust, but in which *his* all was not all that was involved.” The biographer is here doubly mistaken. In the first place, Sir Walter Scott kept a private record of these bill engagements, which his son-in-law may, by possibility, have seen. Secondly, Mr James Ballantyne’s account of them was so correctly kept, that, by a simple addition, he could at any time have told their exact amount. Besides, they were not, as Mr Lockhart is pleased to insinuate, entered into by Mr James Ballantyne without Sir Walter Scott’s knowledge. On the contrary, he had frequent interviews with Scott, in which these matters formed the subject of conference ; and once a month Mr Ballantyne waited upon Sir Walter with a statement of the bills that were to become due in the course of the month following, in order to determine as to the means to be employed for retiring them, which, of course, were found in a series of new bills. What, then, can Mr Lockhart mean by asserting so broadly that Mr Ballantyne “ shut his eyes to the serious liabilities in which he was involved, and never made *even one* serious effort to master

the formidable balances of figures committed to his sole trust?"

A few pages after (*Life*, vol. vi. pp. 116, 117), Mr Lockhart says,—“The reader may perhaps remember a page in a former volume, where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late baronet had ‘kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any cheesemonger in the Grass-market.’ It is, nevertheless, true that *Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own personal expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done* of his own extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son, when first joining the 18th Hussars, about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum-total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike-gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to; but *how strange* that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, *should have allowed others to pledge his credit*, year after year, upon *sheafs* of accommodation-paper, the time for paying which up must certainly come, without keeping any efficient watch on their proceedings—*without knowing, any one Christmas, for how many thousands, or rather tens of thousands, he was responsible as a printer in the Canongate!*”

This alleged anomaly in Sir Walter Scott’s habits is indeed so very “strange,” that, considered apart from evidence, it must appear altogether incredible; and, in point of fact, we have already shown that it is a mere fancy of his imaginative biographer. He who was so

careful in noting down the sixpences and shillings, as often as he drew them from his purse, was not likely to be unmindful of the pounds; far less afflicted with the unparalleled infirmity here attributed to him, of "allowing others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation-paper," and at the same time remaining contentedly in ignorance of "the thousands, or rather tens of thousands, for which he was responsible as a printer in the Canongate." He might be lavish or extravagant in his expenditure, but he was never indifferent to, nor ignorant of, the nature and extent of his liabilities. Probably no man, situated as he was, ever kept a more wakeful and keen eye on the progress of the pecuniary transactions in the explication of which he was so deeply interested. Mr Lockhart, however, seems entirely to forget what we have shown to be the real state of the case,—namely, that Sir Walter Scott's fearful responsibility was not "as a printer in the Canongate," but as an extensive purchaser of land, and co-obligant with Constable and Co.;—though, in the paragraph immediately preceding the one we have quoted, he informs us that, as late as May 1825, Scott was "meditating a new purchase to the extent of £.40,000," to be paid for, of course, upon the credit of James Ballantyne and Co., and Constable and Co.*

* By the month of November, however, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream;" but, in registering his "purpose to practise economics," he unconsciously lets us see that, until then, the science had been known to him only in *theory*. The following extract from the Diary is extremely significant in several views:—

"I here register my purpose to practise economics: I have little temptation to do otherwise.

"Abbotsford is all that I can make it, and too large for the property: so I resolve,—

"No more building;

"No purchases of land, *till times are quite safe*;

Mr Lockhart, therefore, may spare his “ sighing comments,” or, if he delights therein, reserve them for those who were the real victims of that mania which destroyed all within its sphere of operation.

Nor is Mr Lockhart in any respect more fortunate in his attempt to account for the origin of what he terms “ *counter-bills*,” (that is, the bills drawn by Constable and Co. in lieu of those granted to James Ballantyne and Co., for behoof of Sir Walter Scott,) and the use which was made of these bills. “ Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne,” says he, “ it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the other’s raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up *before* [when?] it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course among speculative merchants, and it may be so.” This may or may not have been as Mr Lockhart alleges, though, from the demonstrable inaccuracy of his statements regarding Mr James Ballantyne, we are entitled to doubt; but, whether this allegation be true or the reverse, the reflections in which he again indulges on the management of Sir Walter Scott’s confidential agent, have already been shown to be without foundation—mere random charges

“ No buying books or expensive trifles—I mean to any extent;—and

“ Clearing off encumbrances, with the returns of this year’s labours.

“ Which resolutions, with my health and my habits of industry, will make me ‘ sleep in spite of thunder.’” (*Life of Scott*, vol. vi. p. 138.)

preferred without consideration, and wholly unsupported by evidence. But "mark the issue," Mr Lockhart continues. "The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also, such was the incredible looseness of it, the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie unenquired about in Constable's desk, until they had swelled to a truly monstrous 'sheaf of stamps.' Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and *he rushed with these to the money-changers*. THEY WERE NEARLY ALL FLUNG INTO CIRCULATION IN THE COURSE OF THIS MADDENING PERIOD OF PANIC! And by this one circumstance it came to pass, that, supposing James Ballantyne and Co. to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of L.25,000, they were legally responsible for L.50,000." (*Life*, vol. vi. p. 118). What is here stated seems at first view likely to be true; the statement is, at any rate, exceedingly plausible; but, unfortunately for Mr Lockhart's credit and caution, it is *not* true; and we are at a loss to conceive how he could have risked such a statement without asking for information on the subject, which several persons were in a condition to afford him.

The truth is, "the counter-bills" were not "meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the primary bills being dishonoured." They were as regularly discounted by Constable and Co. as the "primary bills" were by James Ballantyne and Co.; and they were as essential to the former of these houses as the others were to Sir Walter Scott. Lest this should be doubted, we shall print here, as a specimen, one state-

ment of these "counters" and "primaries," which will place the whole matter in a very clear light. It is in the handwriting of Constable and Co.'s cashier at the time, Mr Archibald Fife, and was enclosed in a letter from Mr Cadell, then a partner of that house.

"Edinburgh, 24th June, 1822.

Messrs James Ballantyne and Co.

With A. Constable and Co.

For the following bills, viz.

1822.

Oct. 9. By their acceptance payable at
Curries and Co., . . .

Dr.	Cr.
L. 640 8 0 7 days	— L. 0 12 3
642 0 0 2 , ,	— 0 0 0
<hr/>	
Dr. 2 0 0	

18. By their acceptance at Curries
and Co.,

640 0 0	
<hr/>	

28. To our acceptance due this date,

Cr. 638 0 0	
638 0 0 4 , ,	— 0 7 0
<hr/>	

Nov. 16. To our acceptance due this date,
— By theirs at Curries and Co., . . .

643 9 7	
640 0 0	
<hr/>	

21. To our acceptance due this day,

Dr. 3 9 7 5 , ,	— — — —
649 16 2	
<hr/>	

— By their acceptance at Curries
and Co.,

Dr. 653 5 9	
640 0 0	
<hr/>	

— By exchange, interest, and stamps,

13 5 9 1 , ,	— — — —
11 17 8	
<hr/>	

22. To our acceptance due this date,

Dr. 1 8 1	
638 14 3	Exchange, 10 18 5
<hr/>	

— By theirs at Curries and Co.,

640 2 4	
640 2 4	L. 11 17 8"
<hr/>	

This plain statement, which is only one of many, may be taken as a fair sample of the whole; and it completely overthrows Mr Lockhart's theory of the bill transactions. In it we find the difference of interest nicely calculated, and the place indicated where the "counters" were to be negotiated; the expression "payable at Curries"

showing that they were to be discounted in London by Constable and Co., and that they were to be payable at the banking-house of Messrs Curries, Raikes, and Co. Besides, it will be observed that this statement is dated the 24th June, 1822, and that all the bills enumerated in it fell due in October and November *the same year*. How, then, could Constable have these bills in his desk in January 1826; or, if he had them, how could he have "rushed with them to the money-changers," when they were *between three and four years past due*? The thing is absurd. The bills were *not* in Constable's desk. For observe the entry in the account: "By their (James Ballantyne and Co.'s) acceptance *payable at Curries*"—an entry which shows that the "counter-bills" *were to be negotiated*, and not meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the primary bills being threatened with dis-honour;—and this we know to have been the fact. What, then, becomes of the "truly monstrous sheaf of stamps" with which poor Constable, when his "hour of distress darkened about him," is said "to have rushed to the money-changers?" The statement is either a creature of imagination alone, or of abused credulity. Supposing Constable to have been so utterly devoid of principle (which he was not) as to be capable of a proceeding like this, he had it not in his power to carry it into effect. The only bills which were in his desk, if there were any at all in it, *consisted of such as the money-changers had previously refused to have any thing to do with*; and, consequently, the conduct imputed to him by Mr Lockhart is at once as absurd and impossible as it is untrue.

But this is not the only example of Mr Lockhart's "incredible looseness" of statement on this subject:

We have seen that, in the passage last quoted, the counter-bills are said to have been meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the primary bills being threatened with dishonour; yet, in page 114 of the same volume, Mr Lockhart observes—"It is easy to see that, *the moment the obligations became reciprocal*, there arose *extreme peril* of their coming to be *hopelessly complicated*." True; but does he imagine that James Ballantyne and Co. *reciprocated* their obligations to Constable and Co., merely that Constable himself might accumulate in his desk a "truly monstrous sheaf of stamps," most of which, if they had lain there more than a few months, would have been past due, and, of course, not receivable by any "money-changer" whatsoever?

Sir Walter Scott, in his Diary, takes a just and proper view of these matters; and, being the party most nearly concerned, he is by far the best authority on the subject. His testimony is surely entitled to great weight, and, if so, it is given most decidedly in favour of James Ballantyne. Whence, then, has originated Mr Lockhart's inordinate desire, by statements the most unfair and unfounded, to blacken the character, and prejudice the interests of the family, of one who never consciously injured him, and whom he addressed on his deathbed as the dear friend of Sir Walter Scott,—from whom he solicited and obtained "*the most precious materials*" for Sir Walter's biography,—and whom he prays to continue to draw on his memory for more and more of these "*invaluable details*," at the same time earnestly hoping that his "health, for this and a thousand other good works, may be strengthened and restored?" Whence could have sprung that posthumous animosity which pursues, with unrelenting hostility, the memory

of the man on whom the reviler of his good name lavished expressions of esteem, gratitude, and friendship, at the very moment when he was sinking into the grave, and whose last labours on earth were expended in gathering up and putting together recollections calculated to brighten the glory of Sir Walter Scott? Surely, if ever there was causeless vengeance, it is here displayed; if ever there was an instance of calumny defeated by its own extravagance, it is found in the charges we have refuted. Mr Lockhart, indeed, is the least formidable of all accusers; for his imputations are generally inconsistent with themselves, as well as the evidence upon which they profess to rest; and he is so little acquainted with the real nature of the pecuniary transactions which he has undertaken to describe, that his statements commonly carry their own refutation along with them.

Sir Walter Scott, however, expressed himself in a very different spirit towards his old friend and his companion in misfortune. When his "hour of distress darkened about him," he seemed to take a particular pleasure in rendering justice to one who had borne prosperity with moderation, and now proved himself ready to encounter adversity with fortitude. In his Diary, under date the 17th of January, Sir Walter writes, "James Ballantyne called this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation—has, indeed, taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle." Again, he says, "Ballantyne behaved *like himself*, and **SINKS THE PROSPECT OF HIS OWN RUIN IN CONTEMPLATING MINE.**" Again, in a letter to Mr Lockhart *himself*, written a few days after the insolvency was publicly known in Edinburgh (20th of January, 1826), he declares,—"I HAVE BEEN FAR

FROM SUFFERING BY JAMES BALLANTYNE. *I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me.*" And at a later period, when James Ballantyne wished to obtain a personal discharge from the creditors, such a proceeding being no longer at variance with Sir Walter Scott's plans, the latter wrote to him in the following terms :—

" DEAR SIR,

" I am favoured with your letter, and, so far as I am concerned, give my consent with great pleasure to your discharge, BEING SATISFIED THAT IN ALL YOUR TRANSACTIONS WITH ME YOU HAVE ACTED WITH THE UTMOST CANDOUR AND INTEGRITY.—I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

WALTER SCOTT."

It may be added that Mr Ballantyne's application was met in the same spirit by all the creditors, when he addressed himself to them individually. This will sufficiently appear from the following, out of many answers of a similar kind which were received by him, and which form the best attestation to the character of any man similarly circumstanced. It is a copy of the answer which Messrs Alexander Allan & Co., bankers, returned to his circular requesting their consent to his discharge :—

" SIR,

" We deeply regret that you should have been exposed to such great affliction *from an over confidence in others*, knowing, as we do, that your *integrity and correct business habits* should have led to a far different result.

“ We shall have much pleasure in signing your discharge, accompanied by our best wishes for your future prosperity.— We remain, dear sir, your very obedient servants,

(Signed)

ALEX. ALLAN & Co.”

Mr Lockhart’s evident aversion to James Ballantyne ; his willing sneer ; his glibly repeated nicknames ; and his desire to impute to him, however unjustly, any blame in business matters which might divert attention from, or serve to lighten the weight of censure due to, others,— are too obvious to require notice.* And where he either

* This hostile bias pervades every part of Mr Lockhart’s work. We have already quoted his caricature portraits of the two Ballantynes ; let us now see how he speaks of them incidentally. The following is his formal introductory account of Mr Constable :—

“ The great bookseller of Edinburgh was a man of calibre infinitely beyond these Ballantynes. Though with a strong dash of the sanguine, without which, indeed, there can be no great projector in any walk of life, Archibald Constable was one of the most sagacious persons that ever followed his profession. . . . Indeed, his fair and very handsome physiognomy carried a bland astuteness of expression, not to be mistaken by any one who could read the plainest of nature’s handwriting. He made no pretensions to literature, though he was, in fact, a tolerable judge of it generally, and particularly well skilled in the department of Scotch antiquities. He distrusted himself, however, in such matters, being conscious that his early education had been very imperfect ; and, moreover, he wisely considered the business of a critic as quite as much out of his proper line as authorship itself. But of that ‘ proper line,’ and his own qualifications for it, his estimation was ample ; and, often as I may have smiled at the lofty serenity of his self-complacence, I confess I now doubt whether he rated himself too highly as a master in the true science of the bookseller. He was as bold as far-sighted, and his disposition was as liberal as his views were wide.”

Now mark the purpose to which all this praise is immediately turned. Poor Constable is lauded at first to be damned afterwards ; but even this prolixion is intended to cover the stab

professes to relate facts, or ventures to make definite assertions of an injurious nature, it will, in every instance,

which, through it, is directed at the Ballantynes. Mr Lockhart continues :—" Had he (Constable) and Scott, from the beginning, trusted as thoroughly as they understood each other; had there been no *third parties* to step in, flattering an overweening vanity on the one hand into presumption, and, on the other side, spurring the enterprise that wanted nothing but a bridle, I have no doubt *their joint career might have been one of unbroken prosperity.*" Prove this, Mr Lockhart, if you please, and then, but not till then, we will believe it. " But the Ballantynes were jealous of the superior mind, bearing, and authority of Constable; and, though he too had a liking for them both personally—esteemed James's literary tact, and was far too much of a humorist not to be very fond of the younger brother's company—he could never away with the feeling, that they intervened unnecessarily, and left him but the shadow where he ought to have had the substantial share of confidence." Where, we ask, is the evidence of all this? where does a trace of such " jealousy " as is here talked of appear? and how came Scott, with all his shrewdness, and who understood Constable so well, to permit these brothers to stand between him and that " career of unbroken prosperity " which, it is said, he would have entered upon by giving to Constable " the substantial share of confidence ?" But let us hear Mr Lockhart out. " On his part, again, he (Constable) was too proud a man to give entire confidence where that was withheld from himself; and more especially, I can well believe that *a frankness of communication as to the real amount of his capital and general engagements in business*, which would have been the reverse of painful to him in habitually confidential intercourse with Scott, was out of the question where Scott's proposals and suggestions were to be met in conference, not with his own manly simplicity, but the *buckram pomposity* of the one, or the *burlesque levity* of the other, of his plenipotentiaries." (*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 198, 199, 200.) The good taste, as well as the consistent rectitude, displayed in the close of this passage—written by the man who did not wish, so he says, to wound unnecessarily the feelings of the Ballantynes—will, no doubt, be appreciated by all; and it will also be seen that the whole of the preposterous theory here disclosed has been invented and unfolded for the purpose of barbing these wretched personalities.

be found, upon examination, that he either proceeds in total ignorance, or wantonly indulges in the most unpardonable distortions and misrepresentations. Indeed, he appears to have had a secret consciousness that his statements were ill fitted to stand the test of a searching enquiry; for, at the close of the strange Preface to his seventh and last volume, there is the following remarkable passage:—"As for the reclamations which have been put forth on the score that I have wilfully distorted the character and conduct of other men, for the purpose of raising Scott at their expense, I have already expressed my regret, that *my sense of duty to his memory* should have *extorted* from me the particulars in question. If the complaining parties can produce documents to overthrow my statements, let them do so. But, *even then*, I should be entitled to ask *why those documents were kept back from me?*"

"Why those documents were kept back from him?" The answer is obvious. No man alive could, without an appearance of intentional insult, have anticipated that such "documents" would be required; or that Mr Lockhart's "sense of duty" to the memory of his father-in-law should have "extorted" from him the particulars which he now admits *may* be overthrown. No uninspired individual could have divined Mr Lockhart's intentions, so as prophetically to forestall his accusations, and provide beforehand the materials necessary for a defence. Nor, if this had been possible, would it have been of any avail, either in guarding Mr Lockhart against error, or in preventing his attempts to insult the memory of individuals for whom he had conceived an aversion. The circumstance which we are now about to relate, where accurate information *was* placed within his reach, but only disregarded, entitles us to say so; and we

here entreat the attention of all who may have laid any stress on Mr Lockhart's question, why "documents" were kept back from him. When the sixth volume of the *Life of Scott* was passing through the press, Mr John Hughes, one of the trustees appointed by James Ballantyne, in his last will and settlement, observing the statements about bills introduced into that volume, addressed to the publisher of the work, Mr Cadell, a letter, dated the 26th October, 1837, of which the following is a copy:—

" DEAR SIR,

I send you the proofs of Chapter III. I have not read them, but I have glanced at the last pages, where I find some things *that surely ought to be brought under Mr Lockhart's review*. He says Sir Walter never knew the amount of 'primary bills' and 'counter-bills,' for which he was responsible as the unseen partner of the Ballantynes. Now, the fact is, that *Sir Walter was cognisant of all these bills*. Once every month, Mr Ballantyne waited on Sir Walter (or if he was in the country he wrote to him, or went to Abbotsford personally) with a statement of the bills that fell due in the succeeding month; and they conjointly settled on the means by which they were to be met, which uniformly were by bills of a certain amount, drawn on Constable and Co., and by a certain sum in Constable's promissory-notes to Sir Walter Scott. James Ballantyne and Co. granted counter-bills on Constable and Co. for these bills and notes; and of all these obligations, Sir Walter kept a regular account in a book of his own (*a royal 8vo, bound in red morocco*). This matter was no further under James Ballantyne's management than as he was the *mere instrument* in getting the bills discounted. The

bills, also, I am in a position to show, *were exclusively for Sir Walter's accommodation*, so that, as regards them, Mr Ballantyne must have lost largely. The printing-office was thriving, and had no need of them; and I have not the slightest doubt, when the books are balanced up to the bankruptcy of 1825-1826, that Mr Ballantyne will be found to have been Sir Walter Scott's *creditor* to a considerable amount.

“ The remark about the ‘sheaf of counter-bills’ with which, in his panic, Constable rushed to the ‘money-changers,’ will be looked upon with suspicion by mercantile men; and you and I know that *counters were regularly drawn for the primaries, the difference of interest calculated, and the counters as regularly discounted*; so that any ‘sheaf’ in Mr Constable’s desk must have consisted of such bills as banks had refused, and of such as had been prevented by the failure from being offered.

“ I beg pardon for the length of my note. I meant it to be a short one, but my desire that my late friend should not, though I believe unintentionally, be placed in so erroneous a position, has led me to be too lengthy, perhaps, for your patience.

J. H.”

The note subjoined was sent to Mr Cadell along with the preceding, and emphatically evinces the anxiety of the writer to supply Mr Lockhart with correct information.

“ DEAR SIR,

I hope you will agree with me in thinking the enclosed should be seen by Mr Lockhart; or, if you prefer, I have a copy which I can send him. *It is really*

too bad that James Ballantyne should be made a scape-goat for the transactions by which he was ruined. It is notorious that these bills were *Sir Walter's own*, and James Ballantyne did not know, till the catastrophe of 1825-1826, that *Abbotsford did not stand between him and ruin*, from the extent to which he was engaged for Sir Walter.

J. H."

Here, then, we have a letter written with the sole intention of supplying Mr Lockhart, in some most important particulars, with the information which he complains was "kept back" from him ; and we cannot entertain a doubt that this letter was submitted to him, or, at least, that he was made aware of the information it contained. This excuse, therefore, will not avail him ; these statements were amply sufficient to have set him right in many instances where he has gone widely and absurdly astray ; and it follows, that he must have wilfully adhered to his own distorted views of the character and conduct of other men, or at least neglected to avail himself of the proffered information necessary to place both in a just and true light before the world.

Mr Lockhart says boldly, "if the complaining parties can produce documents to overthrow my statements, let them do so." Does this imply, on Mr Lockhart's part, a feeling of security, arising from a secret belief that the complaining parties cannot produce documents to overthrow his statements, from not having access to any such ? If so, we think we have undeceived him. According to the most elementary notions of justice, no accused person can ever be called upon to prove a negative in his defence. Among all civilised nations the iniquity of such a demand has ever been proclaimed and denounced.

But integrity and truth, however assailed, are seldom left altogether defenceless. There is a special providence that keeps watch over them, and always, sooner or later, provides the means of triumphant vindication. This, however, Mr Lockhart has tried to render as difficult as possible. "If the complaining parties," says he, "can produce *documents* to overthrow my *statements*, let them do so." We admire the modesty displayed in the condition here prescribed. We confess, we did not know before that Mr Lockhart's "statements" were so weighty and authoritative as to require nothing short of "documents" to overthrow them. As this, however, appears to be his own opinion, it is a matter of satisfaction to us that we are in a condition to gratify him; and we shall be glad to find that Mr Lockhart, in any future edition of his work, has sufficient candour to avail himself of the "documents" which, now at least, he cannot say are "kept back" from him.

We have already seen that in James Ballantyne's estimate of means for meeting his liabilities on account of Sir Walter Scott, Abbotsford was always included—("then add Abbotsford, so that there is the head for the washing")—and we further learn, from Mr Hughes's note to Mr Cadell, accompanying the letter intended for Mr Lockhart's view, that Mr Ballantyne did not know, till the catastrophe of 1826, that Abbotsford did not stand between him and ruin, although Sir Walter had divested himself of his estate a year before. Let us now hear Mr Lockhart upon that subject, more particularly as the "counter-bills" are again introduced in connexion with another of those theories in which he is so rife. No wonder he sticks to his own notion of these bills; it keeps him out of every dilemma, resolves every doubt, and smooths every difficulty.

"The firm of James Ballantyne and Co.," says he, "might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concern did for all its obligations, but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in a manner commonly adopted by commercial men [which usually means giving up the whole of one's property to one's creditors], the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of James Ballantyne and Co., whose claims, including *sheafs* of bills of all description, amounted to L.117,000, would have brought into the market *whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed*; they would have had a right to his life-rent of Abbotsford, among other things, and to his *reversionary interest* in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their *marriage-contract*. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, *complicated*, in consequence of the *transfer* of Abbotsford in January 1825. At first some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of the transaction, but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, *Sir Walter Scott felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors*, by entering into that marriage-contract, without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt

in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt that the result of such an examination in January 1825, if accompanied by an instant *calling in* of all the 'counter-bills,' would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion." (*Life*, vol. vi. pp. 223, 224.)

That Sir Walter Scott's feelings in regard to this matter were such as Mr Lockhart has described, we can most readily believe; indeed, he must have felt in this manner, for there could not be two opinions on the subject. But it would be obliging if Mr Lockhart would take some opportunity of explaining *upon what grounds* he has come to the conclusion that the result of an examination by Scott into the state of his responsibilities in January 1825, "if accompanied by an instant calling in of all the *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him at *perfect liberty* to do all that he did on that occasion;"—namely, to divest himself of the fee-simple of his property, and thus place it beyond the reach of his creditors. In the first place, no such examination was made by Sir Walter previously to the execution of his son's marriage-contract; and, therefore, Mr Lockhart is here proceeding upon a vague hypothesis of his own. Secondly, we are prepared to show that, if such an examination had actually been made, the result would have been the opposite of that which Mr Lockhart affirms would have followed; and that Sir Walter would *not* have found himself at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. Thirdly, an instant calling in of all the counter-bills could only have been effected by taking them out of the bankers' hands—that is, by *paying* them; an operation quite as impracticable in January 1825 as it was found to be in January 1826, and therefore not much calculated to

reinforce the examination which Mr Lockhart has supposed.

The truth is, as our readers are already aware, that, on the subject of these "counter-bills," Mr Lockhart labours under some strange hallucination, of which, had he consulted any man of business on the matter, he would have been instantly disabused. He seems to be in total ignorance of the fact formerly explained, that these counter-bills were as regularly discounted as the primary ones, and that, after the dates at which they were drawn had expired, they were of no use whatever; that they were then literally barren "sheafs," wholly inapplicable to the purposes which he has imagined. What, then, does he mean by an instant "calling in of all the counter-bills?" To us these are words without meaning, except in the sense we have stated, namely, retiring them, not by the fabrication of new bills, but by actual *bond fide* payment.

Mr Lockhart proceeds thus:—"However that may have been, and whatever may have been his (Scott's) delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings, not of a merchant, but of a gentleman. He thought that, by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook to a large extent in the self-reliance of their debtor."

Be it so: we are far from entertaining any disposition to impeach or even to weaken the force of this statement; and we unite with all in admiration of the prodigious, the truly glorious effort which Sir Walter Scott made for his extrication, and in which, to the lasting

wonder of the world, he nearly succeeded before death put a period to his unprecedented and exhausting labours. But it must, nevertheless, be kept steadily in view, that the main question as to the propriety or impropriety of "placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors," by the contract of January 1825, "without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities," still remains *in statu quo ante* ;—that what Mr Lockhart says about "an instant calling in of all the counter-bills," is absurd ;—that James Ballantyne all along considered Abbotsford as standing between him and ruin, from the extent to which his name was engaged for Sir Walter ;—and that the catastrophe of January 1826 first revealed to him the astounding fact, that, a year before, the foundation upon which he built all his hopes of safety had been destroyed by the deliberate act of his friend and partner. In these circumstances, which we deem it sufficient merely to bring under the notice of the reader, with a view to a right understanding of the questions here discussed, we may perhaps be permitted to say, that it would have been better for all parties, and decidedly fortunate for Mr Ballantyne, if Sir Walter Scott, waving all unnecessary delicacy, had "regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm" with "the feelings of a merchant," at least equally as with those "of a gentleman ;" for, in passing, we would assure Mr Lockhart that, in spite of his apparent doubts on the subject, they are not wholly incompatible.

We have already had occasion to notice Mr Lockhart's extraordinary statement, that Sir Walter never drew any thing from the printing-house business. A bolder assertion as to matter of fact was never, perhaps, adventured by any man writing for the public ; but the

imprudence which it seems to betray we ascribe to ignorance, rather than to any desire to impose upon or mislead the world. Sir Walter drew from the business largely, as we have already seen, and are still further to see, presently. At the date of the formation of the new copartnership in 1822, the concern, as formerly stated, was engaged to a large amount on account of Sir Walter Scott. The bills current at that time for his accommodation, and for which the firm, of course, was responsible, amounted to L.26,896, 5s. 11d. This large sum, so far from being reduced, was annually augmented, as we have before explained, by the amount of stamps and discounts, at least L.2000 per annum; and in less than four years thereafter Sir Walter received from the company, in promissory-notes, for his own personal use, his son's commission, and builders' bills, about L.14,000. If it be said that this was *not* drawing from the business, we meet the denial by asserting, what we shall immediately prove, that, excepting Mr Ballantyne's family expenses, Sir Walter Scott,—or, which comes to the same thing ultimately, his creditors,—got the whole profits realized by the company, besides the profits accruing to Mr Ballantyne as proprietor of a one-sixth share of the new novels, which was also floating in the business for Sir Walter's accommodation; and, furthermore, all the real and personal property belonging to Mr Ballantyne as an individual. This is amply proved by the following extracts from the Trust Accounts, to which Mr Lockhart, of course, had ready access; but which tell a very different tale from that with which he has sought to entertain his readers.

I. Extracts from Mr Gibson's Trust Accounts, from the 19th January, 1826, to 15th May, 1827, in as far as regards funds realized to James Ballantyne and Co., and to Mr Ballantyne as an individual.

1. Cash in the printing-office at the commencement of the trust,	L.485 13 9½
2. Sums received from sundries in payment of accounts for printing,	2836 5 8
3. Proceeds of the price of a house in Heriot Row, belonging to Mr Ballantyne, after deducting a debt of L.1000 thereon,	1700 0 0
4. Proceeds of sale of policies of insurance on Mr Ballantyne's life,	185 10 0

Credited in first account, independently of the proceeds of shares of the *Weekly Journal*, belonging jointly to Sir Walter Scott and Mr Ballantyne, L.5207 9 5½

II. Extracts from Mr Gibson's Trust Accounts, from the 15th May, 1827, to the 15th May, 1828.

1. Sums recovered from sundries in payment of accounts for printing,	L.3463 2 10
2. Balance in the hands of the printing-office book-keepers, paid over by them,	5 15 10
3. Proceeds of printing materials sold,	1439 16 6*

L.4908 15 2†

III. Extracts from Mr Gibson's Trust Accounts, from the 15th May, 1828, to the 15th May, 1829.

1. Sums received for printing accounts,	L.1294 4 3
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* Part only was recovered this year; but the whole sum was afterwards realized.

† This is also independent of the price of five-eighths of the *Weekly Journal*, upwards of L.2000, which belonged to Sir Walter

IV. In the Account from Whitsunday 1829 to Whit-sunday 1830, there is credited,

1. Price of printing-office buildings,	L.1200	0	0
2. Sums received for printing accounts,	95	4	0
3. Ditto for paper retained in the printing-office,	20	0	0
	<u>L.1315</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>

There is thus credited in whole, as recovered from James Ballantyne and Co., and from Mr James Ballantyne's individual estate :—

1st Account,	L.5207	9	5½
2d Account,	4908	15	2
3d Account,	1294	4	3
4th Account,	1315	4	0

Total, independently of the property of the *Weekly Journal*, L.12,725 12 10½

Disbursements during the preceding period.

1. Accounts from 19th January, 1826, to 15th May, 1827,	L.5552	12	10
2. Ditto from 15th May, 1827, to 15th May, 1828,	487	17	2
3. Ditto from 15th May, 1828, to 15th May, 1829,	122	2	9
Total payments,	<u>L.6162</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>

ABSTRACT.

Amount of receipts,	<u>L.12,725</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10½</u>
Amount of payments,	<u>6162</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u>
Balance of proceeds,	<u>L.6563</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1½</u>

Scott and Mr Ballantyne, in the relative proportion of Sir Walter two-eighths and Mr Ballantyne three-eighths.

This balance, be it observed, is independent of the *Weekly Journal* newspaper, Mr Ballantyne's interest in which realized fully L.1400; his house in Ann Street, which brought L.800; and a considerable claim against Constable and Co., for which James Ballantyne and Co. held in hypothec various printed works, which were made over to Sir Walter Scott's representatives, when a mutual release, which will afterwards be adverted to, was executed. It is evident, then, that for behoof of Sir Walter Scott's creditors, Mr James Ballantyne contributed upwards of L.8,000, independently of his share of business profits from Whitsunday 1822 till January 1826, and his proportion of the profits on the novels, *minus* the amount of his family expenses for the same period, which last scarcely exceeded the half of his income.

Yet Mr Lockhart, with all this evidence before him, or at least within his reach, has, in every possible way, insinuated, nay, directly affirmed, that Sir Walter Scott was "*deeply injured*" by "*the Ballantynes*," endeavouring, and to a certain extent successfully, to impress the public with a conviction that Sir Walter's overthrow was mainly attributable to the neglect and mismanagement of Mr James Ballantyne, who, as we have just seen, was stripped of his all for behoof of Sir Walter's own creditors.* But, although the public, having nothing but Mr Lockhart's partial representations before them, might for a time be deceived, or at any rate induced to suppose that there must surely have been something wrong; yet, now that the defence of the other party has been put on record, and documents have been produced in support of it, we have little doubt that they

* At the time of the bankruptcy, the debts due by James Ballantyne and Co., as *printers*, did not amount to L.1000; and James Ballantyne's personal debts were under L.100.

will reconsider their original erroneous impressions, and pronounce a verdict honourably acquitting the memory of Mr Ballantyne. If such be their final judgment, however, how will it stand with Mr Lockhart? We confess, that we do not by any means regard his position as one of a very enviable kind. He is bound to make good his charge, if he can—or, in the event of failure, to confess that he has unjustly and cruelly aspersed the name of one to whom he had addressed the language of friendship, and at whose hospitable board he had often taken a place, seemingly with pleasure, assuredly with a friendly welcome.

Having discussed these various matters in sufficient detail, and refuted the injurious imputations contained in the *Life*, wherever the author ventures to make specific statements, we shall now, in order to bring the whole matter into one view, introduce a General Abstract of Sir Walter Scott's Accounts; showing clearly that he did derive advantage from his connexion with James Ballantyne, and also exhibiting the gross amount of his liabilities *proper, and in consequence of the bankruptcy.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S ACCOUNTS.

NOTE in regard to the bills which, in any accounting between him and James Ballantyne, Sir Walter Scott would have had to provide for, had there been merely a dissolution of copartnership, and not a bankruptcy.

1. According to the balance-sheet made up by a man of business, mutually chosen by the partners, on 31st December, 1822, and exhibited to Sir Walter Scott on the 17th April, 1823, the bills payable then current, and to be provided for by Sir Walter Scott, amounted to L.36,007 5 5

Brought forward,	L.36,007	5	5
But he, under an arrangement, was entitled to bills receivable, and other Company funds, amounting to	9,110	19	6-
Which still left, at December 1822, to be provided for by Sir Walter,	L.26,896	5	11

2. At the time of the bankruptcy, the bills to be provided for by Sir Walter Scott had increased from L.26,896, 5s. 11d. (their amount in December 1822, after deducting the L.9110, 19s. 6d., for which Sir Walter was allowed credit), to L.46,564, 10s. 5d., composed as under:—

James Ballantyne and Co.'s acceptances to Constable and Co.	
on account of Sir Walter,	L.29,624 17 3
Sir Walter's acceptances to James Ballantyne and Co., also for his own behoof,	16,272 19 10
James Ballantyne and Co.'s acceptance to Hurst, Robinson, and Co., for ditto,	666 13 4
Total amount of Sir Walter's <i>proper</i> liabilities,	L.46,564 10 5

Increase since December 1822, L.19,668 4 6

3. This increase is more than accounted for, when we take into consideration the large sum paid in shape of <i>discounts</i> , which amounted to	L.5,876	0	8
Sum paid as exchange on remittances to London, to retire bills due there, per account, No. II.,	901	11	4
Sum paid for bill-stamps, for Sir Walter's accommodation-bills, per ditto,	251	13	6
Interest on advances by bankers, per ditto,	815	17	7
Commission and postages to London bankers, per ditto,	240	0	0
Total expense of discounts, stamps, &c.	8,085	3	1
Add excess of payments, for Sir Walter, over sums received from him, as per account, No. III.,	17,142	18	10
Giving a total of	L.25,228	1	11

This difference shows clearly that Sir Walter *did* derive advantage from his connexion with James Ballantyne.

4. Sir Walter Scott's liabilities are stated above at L.46,584 10 5	
But in consequence of Constable and Co.'s bank- ruptcy, their acceptances also fell to be pro- vided for by him, amounting to (the accom- modation-bills) L.29,094, 15s. 10d. ; bills for his copies of <i>Crusaders</i> , L.1890 ; bills for James Ballantyne's ditto, L.1890 ; and busi- ness bills (the whole property of the Com- pany having been made over to his creditors),	
L.3604, 17s. 8d.,	36,479 13 6
Hurst, Robinson, and Co.'s acceptances for cash advanced to them,	5,563 15 10
<hr/>	
Gross amount of Sir Walter's liabilities <i>proper</i> , <i>and in consequence of the bankruptcy</i> , . . .	L.88,607 19 9
<hr/>	

This Abstract is made up from detailed accounts, which have been carefully prepared, and its general accuracy may, therefore, be relied on. It brings the whole of these matters, as it were, into a focus ; showing at one view the result of the system acted upon by Sir Walter Scott to raise money for his own purposes,—the liabilities which he consequently incurred,—and the positive pecuniary advantages which he derived from his connexion with James Ballantyne. In fact, his large wants swallowed up every thing. The ordinary profits of the business, though considerable, were very far indeed from sufficing for his demands. He employed it as an instrument for raising and keeping afloat as long as possible the enormous sums above specified ; and when the machinery would no longer work, and the day of reckoning arrived, it was found that the estate purchased with the funds thus raised had been placed beyond the reach of creditors. Mr Ballantyne's all was

swept into the vortex of bankruptcy, and, by the acts of another, his friend and partner, he became "a broken man." But he lived to repair his ruined fortune, and thereby to prove to the world that the business, if left to itself, would have been lucrative and prosperous; and that, under his sole management, it proved a thriving concern.

If any additional proof were wanting to establish the accuracy of the view we have here taken, and to show that the heavy responsibilities which James Ballantyne and Co. had incurred were exclusively for the accommodation of Sir Walter Scott, this would be supplied by the new contract of copartnery, dated on the 1st April, 1822. In that deed, which was to become effectual at Whitsunday 1822, it is expressly provided, in reference to the mutual obligations of the parties towards each other, that, when the new copartnership shall commence, as after specified, "*the said Sir Walter Scott shall remain personally liable for such bills and debts as shall then be due and current*, excepting always such bills, if any, as shall have been granted for additions to the stock of the Company, if any," &c. At the date of this transaction, the bills and debts for which Sir Walter here made himself personally liable amounted nearly to L.30,000; and at the period of the bankruptcy, in January 1826, they had increased to upwards of L.46,000. As to the former sum, then, there can be no doubt whatever, because the contract expressly refers to and proceeds on the document in which it is ascertained; and the stipulations above quoted are perfectly unequivocal. But the addition which was made to these "bills and debts" between the date of the contract and that of the bankruptcy is in precisely the same situation as the ascertained amount of Sir Walter's liabilities at the former period; and, therefore, if Sir Walter was "personally

liable" for the one, he must, by parity of reason, have been equally liable for the other. This, we think, is a conclusion which cannot be shaken. At all events, Sir Walter Scott's liability to the extent specified in the deed is most fully and amply recognised under his own signature.

It does seem to us, therefore, to require something more than rashness or imprudence to affirm that Sir Walter never drew from the business,—that he derived no positive advantage from his connexion with James Ballantyne,—that he was deeply injured by it,—and that Mr Ballantyne's alleged mismanagement was the main cause of his misfortunes. Indeed, Sir Walter Scott himself, in one form or another, contradicts his biographer on every point except the mere ribaldry and abuse in which the latter has so freely indulged ; and, in regard to Mr Ballantyne's capacity for, as well as success in, conducting the business, when left unfettered and untrammelled, we submit to our readers evidence which will probably have more weight in their estimation than Mr Lockhart's unsupported and prejudiced statements.

We have now before us a document holograph of Mr Ballantyne himself, in which this is clearly demonstrated. It is dated February 18, 1826, and entitled, " Statement of the probable situation in which James Ballantyne would be placed should a sequestration take place in the affairs of James Ballantyne and Co., printers in Edinburgh ;" and, by a very clear and distinct process of calculation, it shows, from data unquestionable, none of them hypothetical, that the business, conducted by himself alone, would realize a net annual profit of L.1777, 10s., or nearly L.1800 a-year. It is unnecessary to specify the details of the calculation from which this result is deduced ; but it may

be interesting to subjoin the observations which Mr Ballantyne himself annexed to his "Statement."

"I have thus shown," says he, "by a process of calculation which I am willing should be subjected to the most rigorous examination, that, in the event of a sequestration taking place, my profits, then entirely my own,* would amount to nearly L.1800 a-year; diminished by the interest of the price of my share of the *Journal*, and of my necessary expenditure for types and presses, and other printing materials, which would not exceed L.120 a-year, leaving a gross (clear) profit of L.1600 per annum. It is clear, therefore, that a sequestration would, for me, be by far the most desirable step that could be taken. A comparatively brief period would disenthral me from the painful bonds of dependence, and, as I trust, *with a character not injured by any investigation which might take place*. This would be the *chief part* of the advantages I should anticipate from the measure; but it is also a very important consideration, that it holds out to me the additional benefit of a most respectable income, from which I should derive the means of future and not very distant competence. The term (sequestration) is a harsh one, no doubt; and the measure itself would be accompanied by many painful feelings,—but independence and quiet security would accrue to me from its adoption, unaccompanied, as I trust, by any, even the smallest portion of *disgrace* or *discredit*.

"I do not, however, desire, or even wish, for a sequestration; because there are motives more powerful still than those which I have stated in its favour, which would render it nearly the bitterest potion I could

* The printing-office, materials, &c. being repurchased on Mr Ballantyne's own account.

swallow. But I owe a great duty, and which must be obeyed as the most paramount of all duties, to my family. They have been reduced, *by no particular error of my own*, from affluence to beggary ; have been turned out of their habitation, and have no other barrier than my precarious life and health, betwixt their present dependent state and the still worse misery of total destitution. My death would leave them without a home and without a meal. It is not for a husband and a father to contemplate this, without feeling that all other considerations must hold only a second place in his mind. I am willing to postpone my prospects of freedom, and to forego my well-founded expectations of affluence. But I must not be driven, during an indefinite period of years, out of my station in society. I must not see my wife and children degraded to sordidness of food, habitation, and raiment. I must not see the education of my children stinted, nor their young hearts chilled by privation and penury. In a word, I must not be lowered, for possibly the remainder of my life, to the rank of a mere overseer. This, I think, I can prevent, and this, therefore, I must prevent. There is no man, who considers my situation, who will not appreciate the motives that lead me to this determination ; and I should think there are very few who will not sympathize with, and approve of them. But, at all events, I must be myself the sole ultimate judge of the conduct to which I shall be led by my own sense of duty.

" I have formerly stated to Mr Gibson, through Mr Cowan, what I respectfully think my services are worth, should the affairs bearing my name be wound up under a trust-deed ; and I have now, as I conceive, shown that, according to a reasonable calculation, I could more than double its amount, in the event of a

sequestration. I have nothing further to submit, save my request, that my claims may be dispassionately considered, as I have no reason to doubt they will be, and as early a decision come to upon them as is consistent with the convenience of the respectable Trustees."

There are but few, we think, who could read this manly and touching exposition without being moved by it. It breathes the language of an honourable man, sustained in adversity by the consciousness of unimpeachable integrity, and actuated by a spirit of independence, and a purity of feeling, which it is impossible not to respect. But it is not for the purpose of displaying the praiseworthy qualities of James Ballantyne's mind that we have here introduced it. We have laid it before our readers, partly to give them an idea of the nature of the business out of which, Mr Lockhart says, Sir Walter Scott drew nothing, while Ballantyne was involved in ruin and reduced to beggary; and partly, also, to furnish them with another proof of the incorrectness of this assertion, by showing how far the calculations here made were verified in the sequel.

The sequestration above contemplated was not judged advisable, and the affairs of James Ballantyne and Co. were wound up under a trust. Mr Ballantyne made an entire surrender of his property to the creditors of the Company, or rather to those of Sir Walter Scott; all he had in the world passed into their hands; and, after so many years of labour, and toil, and anxiety, he had to begin life a second time, with diminished energies and clouded prospects. But his honourable conduct, acknowledged probity, and virtuous principles, had secured to him friends, who now, in his day of difficulty, came voluntarily forward to help him. The printing-house and

the materials were sold by the trustees to Mr Cowan, who purchased them on account of Mr Ballantyne; and from and after May 1827, the business was carried on for his own behoof, though, as must be obvious from the circumstances in which he was placed, under considerable disadvantages. Yet, in spite of every drawback, the result was such as at once to disprove all that is said by Mr Lockhart as to his alleged incapacity for managing such a concern, and to afford some idea of the extent to which Sir Walter Scott *must* have profited by his connexion with Mr Ballantyne anterior to the catastrophe of 1826. At the period of his death, in the beginning of 1833, the latter had not only cleared off all incumbrances, but had realized a considerable amount of property over and above.

This simple fact shows, in the first place, the utter improbability of all Mr Lockhart's unsupported statements and insinuations about mismanagement and negligence on the part of Mr Ballantyne; and, secondly, it places beyond all doubt the important fact, that, if Sir Walter Scott's representatives had had any claim against Mr Ballantyne's estate, there were funds to meet it. *But they had none*, and they pretended none, as we shall prove on the authority, *inter alios*, of Mr Lockhart himself.

Soon after Sir Walter Scott's death, and when a settlement of the trust affairs had been effected, under a deed of assignment executed by him and James Ballantyne and Co., application was made to Mr Ballantyne to concur with Sir Walter's representatives in granting a discharge, or release, to the trustees under the assignment; and it was also proposed that this should be accompanied with a mutual discharge between Sir Walter's representatives and Mr Ballantyne. The latter was then

upon his deathbed ; and in a personal interview which his friend Mr Alexander Douglas had with him on the subject, he stated, in feeling language, that he had experienced much kindness and friendship on the part of Sir Walter Scott, and that, whatever might be the state of accounts between them, he wished every transaction which had taken place between them, prior to their misfortunes, to be considered as settled ; and that he should offer no opposition to the arrangement of all claims against Sir Walter Scott, which his representatives were desirous of carrying into effect. But Mr Ballantyne died before this mutual release could be executed or even prepared.

After his death, application was made to his trustees and executors to carry through this arrangement ; and, upon a statement by Mr Douglas of the conference which he had had with Mr Ballantyne on the subject, and which was corroborated by the late Mr John Patterson, brother-in-law of the deceased, the trustees at once agreed to meet the views of Sir Walter Scott's representatives. They accordingly joined with these representatives in a discharge, or release, to Messrs Gibson, Jollie, and Monypenny, the trustees under the deed of assignment which had been executed for behoof of Sir Walter's creditors. At the same time, there was executed a mutual discharge or release between Sir Walter Scott's testamentary trustees, and Mr Ballantyne's trustees and executors. This deed, which now lies before us, is executed on the one hand by the present Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, his brother Mr Charles Scott, and by *Mr John Gibson Lockhart*, the trustees of the late Sir Walter Scott ; and upon the other, by Mr Alexander Ballantyne, the late Mr Patterson, Mr Alexander Douglas, and Mr John Hughes, as four and a quorum of the

trustees and executors of Mr James Ballantyne. It proceeds on the narrative of the deed of assignment which had been executed for behoof of the creditors, the discharge of these creditors, and lastly, the discharge which Sir Walter Scott's representatives, and Mr Ballantyne's trustees and executors, had executed in favour of the trustees under the deed of assignment; and then it subsumes as follows:—

“ And, further, considering that the whole debts and obligations of the said James Ballantyne and Company, and of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, and of the said James Ballantyne, at and preceding the 24th February, 1826, the date of the foresaid trust-disposition, having now been settled and discharged by the creditors of the said Company and individual partners, it is right and proper, to prevent all after-disputes and differences, that a settlement should also take place between the representatives of the said individual partners: And, seeing that the said Sir Walter Scott, now of Abbotsford, Baronet, *John Gibson Lockhart*, and Charles Scott, as testamentary trustees of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet;—and the said Alexander Ballantyne, David Hogarth, John Patterson, David Walker, Robert Hogarth, John Hughes, and Alexander Douglas, as trustees of the said deceased James Ballantyne;—have reason to believe, and are therefore satisfied, that the estates, heritable and moveable, of the said James Ballantyne and Company, of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, and James Ballantyne, made over to the foresaid trustees, for behoof of their creditors, and funds subsequently made available to said creditors, were so made over, realized, and subsequently made available, in fair proportion, to the respective debts and obligations of said Company, and of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott and James

Ballantyne, at the date of said trust ; and that *the heirs and representatives of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, on the one hand, have no claim of relief for payment of any of said debts against the representatives of the said deceased James Ballantyne, or property or effects left by him* ; and that the heirs and representatives of the said James Ballantyne, on the other hand, have no claim of relief against the heirs and representatives of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, or property or effects left by him, or remaining trust-property, made over as aforesaid to the testamentary trustees of the said deceased Sir Walter Scott, Baronet : Therefore the said parties hereto, as trusteesforesaid, do hereby mutually exoner, acquit, and *simpliciter* discharge each other," &c.*

The document from which the above extract has been made, is, of itself, independently of all the other evidence we have produced, conclusive as to the utter groundlessness of what has so frequently been said or insinuated, in the *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, respecting the alleged pecuniary "injury" which Scott is alleged to have sustained in consequence of his connexion with Mr James Ballantyne ; and it is certainly very satisfactory to find the accuser himself a party to such a deed ; embodying, as it does, a formal contradiction of all that he has since promulgated to the disparagement of Mr Ballantyne. The case, therefore, may now be brought within a very narrow compass. We are not aware that the representatives of Sir Walter Scott would have felt disposed to abandon claims which were capable

* This deed of mutual release is recorded in the Books of Council and Session, under date the 5th of March, 1834. It was prepared by Mr Isaac Bayley, the professional agent of the present Sir Walter Scott.

of being maintained, merely out of delicacy to particular individuals; and as to one of their number, Mr Lockhart, he is wholly free from any imputation of having shown either respect for the feelings or consideration for the interests of the representatives and children of Mr James Ballantyne, the intimate and confidential friend of Sir Walter Scott. But it has already been stated, and was well known to Mr Lockhart, that Mr Ballantyne had left property, realized subsequently to the insolvency of 1826. If, therefore, he had conceived that Sir Walter Scott's estate was likely to be benefited by going into a count and reckoning with that of Mr Ballantyne, we do not consider it as any want of liberality to maintain,—and we have no doubt we shall be generally borne out in the opinion,—that Mr Lockhart is the very last man who would have been a party to the mutual discharge or release to which his signature is affixed. On the contrary, if a proper accounting had been gone into between Sir Walter Scott's representatives and those of Mr James Ballantyne, the latter, as we have already had occasion to show, would have been able to establish a very considerable claim against the former; and of this Mr Lockhart could scarcely fail to be aware.

The facts, then, speak for themselves. That the printing establishment was a most profitable concern, has been placed beyond all doubt by the profits realized from it since Sir Walter Scott's insolvency, in 1826, and the property which Mr Ballantyne acquired in the interval between that period and the time of his death. May it not, therefore, be fairly and legitimately inferred, that if Mr Ballantyne had *previously* carried on the business upon his own account, without having had Scott as a partner, *and had come under no engagements for Sir Walter*, he would have realized proportional

profits, and thus left a large fortune to his family? This conclusion appears to us to be a legitimate one. The business before the bankruptcy was not less, but *greater* than after it. What, then, became of the profits, unless they were all absorbed by Scott, *minus* only the expenses of Mr Ballantyne's family? James Ballantyne was ruined, and left penniless. Sir Walter Scott, or, which comes to the same thing, his creditors, must, therefore, have got all. How this was effected, we have already explained pretty fully. In purchases of land, made contrary to every rule of prudence; in buildings, plantings, and improvements, carried on with a total disregard of expense; and in the gratification of a taste for splendid hospitality, and articles of *vertu*, habitually indulged,—were employed the immense sums raised by means of discounts obtained at the different banks, and which deprived Mr Ballantyne of all hope of escape, and in the end brought about his ruin.

Mr Lockhart's repeated allusions to Mr Ballantyne's exterior manner, and to his alleged enjoyment of the pleasures of the table, are in that peculiar vein in which he delights to indulge, and which we gladly and safely surrender to the judgment of all honourable and right-hearted men. Convinced, however, that Sir Walter Scott would have been the very last man to hold up to ridicule his intimate friend, however much he may have joked on the subject in the bosom of his own family, we beg, in taking leave of the topic, simply to ask,—Does Mr Lockhart discharge his duty to the memory of his illustrious connexion, by doing that which Sir Walter, if alive, would unquestionably have been bound, by every high-minded and honourable feeling, to resent and reprimand as a personal affront to himself?

Having thus disposed of the principal charges against "the Ballantynes," and produced evidence in refutation

of every tangible assertion made by Mr Lockhart, we shall now advert to some incidental matters, the account of which betrays the same *animus* which we have already had occasion to expose and reprehend.

And, first of all, Mr Lockhart, speaking of a quarrel, or dispute, which took place in the year 1808 between Sir Walter and Messrs Constable and Hunter, and for a time interrupted Scott's connexion with these gentlemen, proceeds to say:—"Mr Constable had then for his partner Mr Alexander Gibson Hunter, afterwards Laird of Blackness, to whose intemperate language, much more than to any part of Constable's own conduct, Scott ascribed this unfortunate alienation; which, however, as well as most of my friend's subsequent misadventures, *I am inclined to trace*, in no small degree, to the *influence* which a third person, hitherto unnamed [viz. Mr John Ballantyne], was about this time beginning to exercise over the concerns of James Ballantyne." (*Life*, vol. ii. pp. 195, 196.) Then follow several pages of unsupported assertions and contemptible personalities, intended to turn the Ballantynes into ridicule, and render them objects of contempt to the thoughtless and unreflecting, who take their impressions on trust, and believe merely because it is written. But, happily, there exists a document which will not only set this incident in its true light, but show that, in regard to the quarrel between Scott and Constable, Mr Lockhart has drawn as freely on his imagination as in any of the more important pecuniary matters and transactions we have had occasion to notice. We allude to a Diary commenced by Mr James Ballantyne in the end of October 1808, and continued till the beginning of April 1809, where the progress of this affair is carefully noted down.*

* It is a matter of deep regret to the family and connexions of Mr Ballantyne, that he did not persevere in the design he appears to

The first entry in reference to this matter is dated November 11, 1808, and thus expressed :—“ This day distinguished by Mr Scott’s observation of a growing coolness on the part of Constable. In what will it terminate? In this sacred repository of my thoughts let me indulge in conjecture. This coolness I have long noticed.” Then follows the conjecture formed at the moment. “ This coolness may arise either from Constable’s increasing political violence, and the trammels, partly with his own consent, partly without it, into which he is daily more and more led by the Whig party ; or from his idea that Mr Scott makes his name too common, and therefore too cheap, which will injure his edition of Swift ; or from jealousy of Murray’s visit, and apprehension of Mr Scott’s having contracted some new literary engagement with him.” After more to the same purport, and some speculation how far the coolness, if it issued in an open rupture, might affect the printing-house, he concludes thus :—“ We owe, and we will pay, gratitude to Mr Constable for all the acts of kindness he has shown us, and will strive to retain his regard by temper, patience, and respect.” So, in his private diary, writes James Ballantyne,—who, indeed, it is evident, instead of any conceivable motive to foment this quarrel, had the strongest interest in preventing and appeasing it. And we shall presently show, that it can as little be attributed to the “ influence exerted over his concerns,” either by John Ballantyne or any one else.

have formed of keeping a regular Diary of passing events. Such a record would have been highly valuable ; and, from the fulness, distinctness, and accuracy, with which the entries are made in the portion which he actually executed, we are amply warranted in believing that, if he had prosecuted his original intention, there would have been no occasion for making elaborate researches in quest of materials to refute any slander that might be levelled at his memory.

“ December 5.—Was sent for by Constable in the afternoon. Found him civil, and got a new edition of Carleton to print. Hunter came in, and becoming rude, not to me, but of my friends, I left the room. December 8.—Called on Mr Constable before dinner, and communicated to him the plan of the ‘ Register.’ He claimed it as his own, asserting he had communicated it to me on our journey from London in spring. I strongly and truly denied all recollection of it. Our conversation was civil, and we parted, to all appearance, friends. His whole deportment was calmer than I had expected. I consider all intercourse betwixt us as nearly broken off; but I resolve to show him all the friendship and regard he will permit me to show him. Called on Mr Scott, and communicated all that had passed. December 9th.—Breakfasted with Mr Scott, to talk over further the ‘ Register,’ and to communicate a letter from Mr Constable, received the night before, suggesting to me the propriety and necessity of not bringing forth my Prospectus of the ‘ Register,’ as he knew he could bring to my recollection his having imparted the plan to me on our journey from London. Mr Scott and I agreed in thinking that, even if he could do so (which I believed and was satisfied he could not), it was nothing to the purpose; for nothing he could say to me respecting an intention exclusively his own, could, in common sense, be expected to influence me either in one way or another. I therefore wrote civilly in answer, and about two o’clock published my Prospectus.”

The next entry on this subject is dated the 11th December, and is in these terms:—“ Called on Mr Jeffrey, in consequence of his own desire, and talked over the ‘ Register.’ He was extremely civil, approving the plan in general, and giving several useful

hints respecting the possibility of improving it. Called afterwards on Mr Scott, communicating to him what Mr Jeffrey had said. While in the act of leaving him, a coach stopped at the door, from which alighted Mr Constable. Not wishing to meet him, I stepped into the dining-room till he had passed into the library, and then left the house. In the evening, in consequence of a line from Mr Scott, I waited on him, and heard what had passed betwixt him and Mr Constable. The summary is shortly this; Mr Scott spoke indignantly of the conduct and language of Mr Hunter towards him, offered to relinquish the engagement respecting Swift, and took every means to show Mr Constable the indignation he felt towards Hunter, for the liberties he had taken with his literary character, and the general deportment of their house. Respecting Hunter, he said, 'Sir, he might as well have taken a lighted candle through your warehouses as have spoken as he has done of my literary reputation. He talks of me as having made my name cheap. For whom have I made it cheap? For you, sir, and for nothing. Did I not do Hodgson, Carey, Carleton, &c. to serve you; and did I ever ask or receive any remuneration? Sir, if Mr Hunter had taken the same liberties with my personal as he has done with my literary character, he should have heard from me in different terms.' Mr Constable seemed deeply distressed—pressed that Swift might go on—offered money for Mr Scott's gratuitous labours—confessed Mr Hunter's rashness; and so they parted. At this meeting the 'Register' became the subject of conversation. Mr Constable expressed his resolution to drop all ideas of rivalry, though not concealing his dissatisfaction with me; of which, of course, Mr Scott took little or no notice."

It is evident, from what we have quoted, that the quarrel with Mr Constable originated in the rudeness of Mr Hunter towards Sir Walter Scott; and it seems equally evident that Sir Walter viewed it without regret. Though, by his own confession, in a letter to Mr Ellis (*Life*, vol. ii. p. 215), he had charged a brace of "bombs," intended to burst on Constable's devoted head, he had, nevertheless, the address, at the interview described by Mr Ballantyne in his Diary, to become the accuser; and appears to have played the part so well, that the great bibliopole, with all his shrewdness, conceded every thing;—"pressed that Swift might go on—offered money for Mr Scott's gratuitous labours—confessed Mr Hunter's rashness;" in a word, surrendered at discretion.

So far, therefore, from John Ballantyne having been concerned in this quarrel, or instrumental in provoking it, his name is not once mentioned in James Ballantyne's account of the affair, written day by day during the period of its progress; and there is not a particle of evidence to sustain Mr Lockhart's allegation, that the misunderstanding might be traced, in no small degree, to the influence which John was about this time beginning to exercise over his brother's concerns. The real influence lay in a different quarter. Sir Walter was himself the first mover in every thing. Although he represents himself to his friend Mr Ellis as only the "adviser" of James Ballantyne in the matter of the "Register," it is notorious that the work was projected by him, and that he was a proprietor thereof; and it is equally certain, that the scheme of starting "a new bookselling-house in Edinburgh," which Mr Lockhart acknowledges to have been "begun in the short-sighted heat of pique on the part of Sir Walter," was also

exclusively his own, notwithstanding that the matter is disguised in his correspondence. How, then, are we to account for, or explain, the insinuations against John Ballantyne? How, with so many facts of this nature staring him in the face, can Mr Lockhart imagine that the world will impute the misfortunes of the house of James Ballantyne and Co. to any other than the true cause, namely, the rash projects of Sir Walter Scott himself?

Mr Lockhart gives an account of the memorable affair of the *Beacon* newspaper, which involved Sir Walter in much discredit, and led eventually to a very melancholy catastrophe.* “Mr Lockhart’s account of this matter,” says the *Spectator*, “is such as might be expected from his own political spirit. He finds no fault with the scheme for establishing a newspaper, whose object was the most violent Tory partisanship: his censure is directed against the blunders which rendered the scheme abortive. This was, perhaps, to be expected. ‘The *Beacon*,’ he says, ‘originated in the alarm with which the Edinburgh Tories contemplated the progress of Radical doctrines during

• The event here alluded to is thus noticed by Mr Lockhart:—“The results were lamentable: the *Beacon* was made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, from which the then heads of Scotch Toryism did not escape in any very consolatory plight; but, above all, the *Beacon* bequeathed its rancour and rashness, though not its ability, to a Glasgow paper, of a similar form and pretensions, entitled the *Sentinel*. By that organ the personal quarrels of the *Beacon* were taken up and pursued with relentless industry; and, finally, the Glasgow editors disagreeing, some moment of angry confusion betrayed a box of MSS., by which the late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was revealed as the writer of certain truculent enough pasquinades. A leading Edinburgh Whig, who had been pilloried in one or more of these, challenged Boswell; and the baronet fell, in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman.” (*Life*, vol. v. pp. 153, 154.)

the agitation of the Queen's business in 1820, and the want of any adequate counteraction on the part of Ministerial newspapers in the North. *James Ballantyne had, on that occasion, swerved from his banner*, and, by so doing, given not a little offence to Scott. He approved, therefore, of the project of a new weekly journal, *to be conducted by some steadier hand*; and, when it was proposed to raise the requisite capital for the speculation by private subscription, expressed his willingness to contribute whatever sum should be named by other gentlemen of his standing.' Mr Lockhart here treats James Ballantyne with an injustice of which too many instances have occurred in this work."* His censure of Mr Ballantyne in this matter we hold to be the very highest praise he could unwittingly bestow on that gentleman. But, as usual, Mr Lockhart is inaccurate in his facts. The *Beacon*, he says, was established because James Ballantyne had swerved from his banner, and because Sir Walter Scott wished for a journal to be conducted by some steadier hand. But, if such was Sir Walter's motive, it is curious that he should have offered *the editorship of the new journal* to his old friend,

• "No part of Mr Ballantyne's conduct," continues the *Spectator*, "does him higher honour than the manly firmness with which, Tory as he was, he refused to permit his journal to be prostituted to the mean objects of a faction, and with which, notwithstanding his habitual respect and deference for Scott, he not only withstood his remonstrances and frowns, but even saw him transfer his favour and support to a newspaper established in express opposition to Ballantyne's own. From an *impartial* biographer such conduct would have drawn a willing tribute of admiration." The same journal adds, "that it was the very *steadiness* of Ballantyne's hand that rendered him obnoxious to the displeasure of the Edinburgh Tories, and to that of one of the most violent among them—Sir Walter Scott."

with a salary of no less than £.500 a-year ; an offer, however, which Mr Ballantyne, to his infinite honour, *refused to accept*. His pen was not that of a hireling, his integrity was not to be bought. He may have been mistaken in his views of certain public matters, but he was ever honest and sincere ; nor could any consideration induce him to swerve from what he believed to be the truth. In several well-known instances he gave the most convincing proofs of manly firmness and independence of character ; and in the particular case before us, his refusal to accept the editorship of the *Beacon*—a fact which we state upon undoubted authority—reflects the highest honour on his memory. The nature of the connexion which Mr Ballantyne would have formed, had not his spirit and his principles secured him against the possibility of ever making himself the tool of a party, may easily be conjectured from the following letter on the subject, which Scott addressed to Mr Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, after the whole concern had been blown to pieces :—

“ I had the fate of Cassandra in the *Beacon* matter from beginning to end : I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion, one of those ‘gentlemen of the press’ who understand the exact lengths to which they can go in their vocation. Then I wished them, in place of that bond, to have each thrown down his hundred pounds, and never enquired more about it ; and, lastly, I exclaimed against the crown-counsel being at all concerned. In the two first remonstrances, I was not listened to ; in the last I thought myself successful, and it was not till long afterwards that I heard they had actually subscribed

the bond. Then the hasty renunciation of the thing, as if we had been doing something very atrocious, put me mad altogether. The fact is, it is a blasted business, and will continue long to have bad consequences."

The only other matter which we deem of sufficient importance to deserve particular notice, occurs in the seventh and last volume of Mr Lockhart's work. About the middle of February 1829, Mr Ballantyne had the irreparable misfortune of losing, by fever, in the prime of life, and under family circumstances peculiarly painful, a most excellent and amiable wife, to whom he was strongly attached. "With his domestic habits," says Sir Walter Scott, in his Diary of the 17th of February, "the blow is irretrievable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair." He was, in fact, overwhelmed with grief; but, so far from giving way to despair, he, like a true Christian, humbly applied for comfort and support at the only Source of all lasting consolation. He was not able to appear at his wife's funeral; and this, it seems, Scott viewed "with something more than pity," which, we presume, means contempt. Mr Ballantyne, however, rallied a little; and, having made some settlement of his affairs, intimated to Sir Walter his intention of retiring for a few weeks to the country, there to struggle in solitude with an overpowering sorrow. Let us now hear Mr Lockhart:—

"Ballantyne retired, accordingly, to some sequestered place near Jedburgh, and there, indulging his grief in solitude, fell into a condition of religious melancholy, from which, I think, he never wholly recovered. Scott regarded this as a weakness, and, in part at least, as wilful weakness, and addressed to him

several letters of strong remonstrance and rebuke. I have read them, but do not possess them, nor *perhaps* would it have been proper for me to print them. In writing of the case to myself, he says, ‘ I have a sore grievance in poor Ballantyne’s increasing lowness of heart, and I fear he is sinking rapidly into the condition of a religious dreamer. His retirement from Edinburgh was the worst advised scheme in the world. I in vain reminded him that when our Saviour himself was to be led into temptation, the first thing the devil thought of was to get him into the wilderness.’ Ballantyne, *after a few weeks*, resumed his place in the printing-office, but he addicted himself more and more to what his friends considered as erroneous and extravagant notions of religious doctrine; and I regret to say, that in this difference originated a certain alienation, not of affection, but of confidence, which was visible to every near observer of their subsequent intercourse. Towards the last, indeed, they saw but little of each other. I suppose, however, it is needless to add that, down to the very last, Scott watched over Ballantyne’s interests with undiminished attention.”

Perhaps it may be so; but in this instance his anxiety had reference, also, to his own affairs. It has already been seen how necessary James Ballantyne’s critical emendations had become to a writer whose compositions were thrown off with such haste and rapidity. At this time the printing-office was busily occupied with the novel entitled *Anne of Geierstein*, and Mr Ballantyne could ill be spared. His absence, indeed, was a serious inconvenience to Scott; and, with all respect for the latter, we believe that Mr Ballantyne’s opinions on religious doctrine,—in which there was neither extravagance nor “dreaming,”—would have caused him much less un-

easiness had not that gentleman thus withdrawn himself for a time from business, to indulge and thereby subdue the grief by which he was overwhelmed. Sir Walter, in his Diary, April 18th, says,—“ I find J. B. has not returned to his business, though I wrote to say how necessary it was. *My pity begins to give way to anger.* I have written to him letter third, and, I am determined, last.” Mr Ballantyne, however, did return to his business, with his faculties unimpaired, and his feelings, which had received so deep a wound, composed ;—he did not subside into the condition of a religious dreamer, as Sir Walter had feared ;—and, notwithstanding all he had suffered, his fidelity, watchful affection, and unequalled services, never failed Scott, either upon this or any other occasion. His opinion, indeed, of the work then in progress (*Anne of Geierstein*) was but too faithfully given ; and, whatever may have *originated* the “ alienation ” alluded to, the disapprobation Mr Ballantyne felt himself compelled to express regarding this novel and those which succeeded it,—added to the more moderate tone of politics which he had adopted, and coming upon Scott at a time when his own health and spirits were very indifferent,—contributed largely, we have no doubt, to increase the feeling ; till, on Sir Walter’s part, it became a settled coolness towards his old friend, which lasted for the short remainder of his life.

Of this breach between Sir Walter Scott and himself, Mr Ballantyne, in writing to Mr Lockhart shortly before his death, had spoken ; and,—as a curious contrast to the tone assumed by the latter gentleman in the work which has called forth these *Strictures*,—we shall insert here his reply to that and another letter from Mr Ballantyne, written about the same time.

“ *London, Nov. 1, 1832.*

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ If any feeling had really existed of the nature which your letter begins with mentioning, *that most touching, most manly letter would have been a thousand times more than enough to do away with it for ever.* I can, however, speak for myself, that, though I did observe a certain difference in your relations with your dear friend Sir Walter, *I never even for one moment dreamed that any thing had occurred to disturb the old, genial feelings* which had through your lives been equally marked in both of you as friends. For two years before his death, Sir Walter Scott was no longer, in all respects, the man of his earlier days; and I can perfectly understand, that his *political impressions* should have been conveyed within that period in a style which would not before have been possible for him. Let us draw a veil over the infirmities of those few sad and weary months, and now endeavour to think of him only as he was when you and I so often shared together the delights of his friendship and conversation.

“ Your Memoranda of him will be expected by me as among *the most precious materials for his biography.* You knew the man from a boy; and his literary life may be said to have been *all in your presence*, even from the working of its smallest springs. I earnestly hope your health may soon be entirely re-established; and I am joined in this wish by all the members of my wife's family (they are all at this moment here), as well as in the expression of sincere regret that you should have had the pain of writing such a letter at such a time.

Believe me *truly* and *cordially* yours,

(Signed) “ J. G. LOCKHART.

“ *James Ballantyne, Esq. Printer, Edinburgh.*”

Mr Lockhart, having received the Memoranda alluded to, again writes to Mr Ballantyne in the same “ cordial ” and affectionate manner :—

“ London, December 6, 1832.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I have received your packet, and read with infinite interest *its precious contents*. Your outline of your intercourse with Sir W. Scott is quite sufficient to keep me right as to some, most indeed, of the literary epochs of his life. The anecdotes interwoven and appended are even more valuable. Perhaps what you say as to his early felt superiority over all that came into contact with his judgment, temper, and intellectual resources generally, will be to posterity a most satisfactory piece of evidence, how true that in him the boy was father to the man. I feel as if I had known him in the days of Kelso, and the Tavern-club, and the Stage-coach Journey.

“ *I pray you continue to draw on your memory for more and more of these invaluable details* ; and may your health, for this and a thousand other good works to follow, be strengthened and restored.

“ Ever yours, most sincerely,

(Signed) “ J. G. LOCKHART.

“ To James Ballantyne, Esq. Printer, Edinburgh.”

“ Truly and cordially yours ! ” Are we to take as evidence of his “ cordiality ” the manner in which Mr Lockhart has, throughout the whole of his work, treated the memory of the man whom he thus addresses,—endeavouring to stigmatise his habits, ridicule his person, and blacken his character, by holding him up to the world as a mere *fanfaron*, overblown with vanity, pomposity, and gluttony—negligent, conceited, and full of vain imaginations ? Is it thus, we ask, that

Mr Lockhart shows his regard for the old and intimate friend of Sir Walter Scott, whom he is also fain to claim as his own? Is it thus that he usually adjusts his practice to his professions, and evinces his cordiality towards those whom he honours with his friendship?

But these letters require no commentary. They are, as the reader will observe, filled with expressions of regard for Mr Ballantyne, and of gratitude for the important contribution he had made towards the projected Memoirs of his illustrious friend; a contribution which Mr Lockhart himself describes as quite sufficient to "keep him right as to some, most indeed, of the literary epochs" of Sir Walter's life. Yet, at the very time when he was writing in these terms to Mr Ballantyne, then on his deathbed, and exhausting his last energies in the labour of love he had undertaken, Mr Lockhart must have been engaged in concocting those unjust, ungenerous, and derogatory reflections, the refutation of which has formed the subject of the present publication. For the honour of Letters, we sincerely trust that the duplicity here displayed is of but rare occurrence in the intercourse of literary men, and that the cause of literature will not soon again be discredited by such a humbling disclosure.

Finally, in taking the retrospect of all that we have written, we confess our total inability to reconcile with any principle known to us the extraordinary animosity with which, from first to last, the name of Ballantyne is pursued; far less to account for that unparalleled pertinacity of misrepresentation which it has been our painful task to expose in the course of this pamphlet. But, in a recent volume of the *Quarterly Review*, we are furnished with a theory on this subject, which, as it is evidently the production of one well acquainted with the principles of that species of biography in which

Mr Lockhart excels, we shall, without scruple, submit to the consideration of our readers, as a fitting conclusion to Strictures which, from their very nature, could scarcely assume a methodical form. The solution in question is to be found in the introduction to a review of the *Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh*, contained in that Journal.

“ Whether a man writes his own life or *that of some dear friend lately deceased*, it is evident that there must be such a favourable colour spread over the picture that its *fidelity* must be rather worse than dubious; for even in a court of law the evidence of a party can only be admitted in the rare case in which it shall be against himself. Unfavourable or discreditable circumstances are generally passed over in silence; or, if they should be of too much notoriety to be wholly unnoticed, they are so covered by the *veil of partiality* as hardly to be recognised. . . . Nor is it with regard to the *principal subject* only, that contemporaneous biography, by a man’s own or friendly hands, is unsatisfactory; many, and in some instances almost all, of the secondary characters in the drama of his life are still upon the stage. If the writer should possess good-nature and delicacy, these persons will probably be treated with insipid or exaggerated complaisance—justly enough in one respect: *being brought involuntarily before the public* as mere subordinates to the principal figure, it would be cruel to treat them otherwise than civilly; and the *keeping* of the picture forbids their being treated with more than civility. But, on the other hand, *if the pen happens to be caustic, and the hero of the book has had much dealings with mankind*, it is almost impossible that there should not supervene *a great deal of prejudice and consequent misrepresentation*; so that, what between cautious good-breeding on the one hand, and rivalry and scandal on

the other, *the secondary characters of a contemporaneous biography are, in general, still less justly delineated than the hero himself*,—and, upon the whole, we feel corroborated in our doubts whether *the very best of this species of biography can be considered in any higher light than a romance of real life*—a picture of which the principal figure must be considerably flattered, and **EVERY THING ELSE SACRIFICED TO ITS PROMINENCE AND EFFECT.**”

Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam !

THE END.

